The class novel in first and second year mixed ability classes

Thesis

UNRESTRICTED

FRANCIS P. LENNON M.A.(HONS)

THE CLASS NOVEL

IN FIRST AND SECOND YEAR

MIXED ABILITY CLASSES

DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

MARCH 1989

Date of submission : 6th April 1989
Date of award : 30th October 1989

ABSTRACT

There is conflicting evidence on the extent and value of using the class novel in English classrooms, particularly in the first two years of secondary school. This study looks at the literature on this subject over the last eighty years or so and discovers that it is inconclusive and deficient in certain respects.

A new survey was therefore set up involving teachers of English in one division of Strathclyde - Lanark. The design, piloting and issue of the questionnaire used in the survey is explained in detail.

The questionnaire focused on certain key issues such as the prevalence of the use of the class novel, its relative importance in the English curriculum of first and second years (as compared with other components of the English curriculum such as poetry and drama), the reasons that teachers gave for using it, the methods of reading they employ and the problems that its use poses for the teacher of a mixed ability class.

A full report of the survey's findings is given. Some of the key findings are that contrary to the frequently expressed view in 'official' reports over the years, the class novel is considered by large numbers of teachers of English to be the most important component of their courses in both first and second years; that there is a great reliance on reading aloud in class as a method of reading and that there are practical problems associated with its use in the

mixed ability class when there are numbers of pupils unable to cope with reading the class novel unaided. Some light is thrown on the types of assignments that teachers set once the novel has been read where the survey discovers that two types of assignment dominate work on the class novel - questions on the novel's storyline and assignments using the novel as stimulus for personal / creative writing.

The findings are discussed in some detail in relation to literature in the field and also in relation to traditionally held theories about what the nature of English teaching should be.

Unresolved issues are identified such as the effect that type of class might have on the decision to use a class novel and on the method of reading it; the use of the novel in the year(s) immediately prior to the secondary school in primary and its use in the later years of secondary school. In the light of these, suggestions are made for future research and some attempt is made at evaluating the practical implications of this study for current practice.

CONTENTS

List of Tables		ii
Chapter 1	Background to the Study	1
Chapter 2	The Class Novel Since 1919	7
Chapter 3	The Investigation	65
Chapter 4	Findings	86
Chapter 5	Some Comments on Findings	144
Chapter 6	Further Discussion	181
Chapter 7	Implications for Current Practice and Suggestions for Future Research	198
References		204
Appendix I		208
Appendix II		209
Appendix III		214
Appendix IV		221
Appendix V		231
Appendix VI		236
Appendix VII		237

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Methods of Reading (PQ)	74
2	Methods of Reading (FQ)	75
3	Questionnaire Response Rate - I	83
4	Questionnaire Response Rate - II	85
5	S1/S2 Teachers Using Class Novels	87
6	Class Novel Use with Types of Class	88
7	Teachers of Mixed Ability Class(es)	88
8	Class Composition	89
9	Methods of Reading	92
10	Methods of Coping with Absentees	96
11	Methods of Reading Aloud	98
12	Assignments on the Class Novel	100
13	Pupils with Reading Difficulties - I	101
14	Pupils with Reading Difficulties - II	101
15	Types of Assignment	104
16	Average Number of Class Novels Used	105
17	Range of Class Novel Use	106
18	Percentage English Periods Devoted to Class Novel Use	107
19	Reasons for Using Class Novels	109
20	Reasons for Reading Aloud	111
21	Problems of Using Class Novels	113
22	'Other' Problems	114
23	Importance of Class Novel	115

Table		Page
24	Relative Importance of Class Novel	121
25	Use of Three or More Class Novels	122
26	Relative Importance of Reasons for Using Class Novel	123
27	Relative Importance of Problems in Using Class Novel	124
28	Reading Aloud and Problem of Using Class Novel	125
29	Relative Importance of Methods of Reading	126
30	Relative Importance of Reasons for Reading Aloud	128
31	Second Ranked Reasons for Reading Aloud	129
32	Main Reasons for Using Reading Aloud as Main Method	130
33	Reading Aloud and Ensuring Same Rate of Reading	131
34	Absentees	132
35	Absentees and Reading Aloud - S1	134
36	Absentees and Reading Aloud - S2	135
37	Methods of Coping with Absentees and Reading Aloud	136
38	Oral Summary Method and Reading Aloud	137
39	Three or More Pupils with Reading Difficulties	138
40	Pupils with Reading Difficulties and Reading Aloud - S1	139
41	Pupils with Reading Difficulties and Reading Aloud - S2	140
42	Mixed Ability (Remedial Extraction) and Method of Reading	141
43	Assignments Set	142
44	Re-Reading Required	142
45	Relative Importance of Assignments	143

CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1. How Did the Study Arise ?

English teaching has always been concerned with reading and latterly with literature. However, it is only in this century that the novel, the most widely read of the literary genres, has been widely taught in schools. Although much has been written about other aspects of the English curriculum, it is somewhat surprising, that how the novel is taught is not well documented; nor is there general agreement on what issues need addressing in any discussion of its use in English classrooms in the secondary school. Particularly notable in this regard is the use of the class novel in the secondary school (i.e. one novel a copy of which is issued to every pupil in a given class).

1.1 Why Study the 'Class Novel' ?

There has been much uncertainty about the treatment of the class novel in secondary schools over the years. It is very difficult indeed for a classroom teacher to find published material on the problems and possibilities of using one novel with an entire class. This is quite remarkable to one who began teaching in 1975, the year of the publication of the Bullock Report - A Language for Life (D.E.S. 1975). That the survey, commissioned by the Bullock committee, should have so completely ignored the use of the class novel in English classrooms,

seemed to me very surprising. But then the Bullock Report was an English document and perhaps was of only limited relevance to one teaching English in Scotland. Certainly the committee made no visits to Scotland in the course of its deliberations and included no Scottish schools in its survey. By contrast, visits were made to 13 schools in the U.S.A., from San Francisco and Los Angeles to New York and Boston (see Appendix A: pp 561-576). Nor was there much in the way of other Scottish evidence submitted to the committee either orally or in writing - only Fife L.E.A. is listed as having given oral evidence and only six individuals are listed as having given written evidence (one of them being the Director of Education for Fife, one an H.M.I. from the Scottish Education Department, three university lecturers and one head teacher of a primary school). Quite apart from this, the survey's finding (see Chapter 25: Tables 77 and 78, pp 419-21) that one third of teachers teaching English in secondary schools in England had no qualification in the subject, struck me as being astonishing and quite alien to the Scottish system, where in order to teach English (or indeed any other subject) in a secondary school, registration has to be obtained from the G.T.C. which depends upon qualifications in that subject specialism.

In spite of this, what the report had to say about the teaching of English, has always been assumed, by those concerned with the provision of in-service training for new teachers, to be applicable to Scottish schools without, or so it has seemed to me, any reservation.

There was a great deal of in-service provision for new teachers in

the three years immediately following the publication of the Bullock Report. It could be argued however that there was a discernible gulf between what was being advocated - usually by college of education lecturers and l.e.a. Advisers in English but sometimes by other teachers of English - and what actually seemed to be going on in schools. This was particularly true about classroom reading. The unchallenged orthodoxy (for so it appeared to me at the time) which was being advocated was 'individualised' reading in class, where the emphasis was on methodology : on how best this could be organised by using group methods and class libraries. Yet evidence, either from my own school experience or from the literature, or from conversations with other teachers of English that I knew, of any such development actually having taken place was very difficult to find. Apparently we were all not only using class novels, but we were all devoting very significant proportions of our class time in S1 and S2 to them. My own concerns therefore were related, not to the problems of individualised reading within the class, but to the use of the class novel particularly with mixed ability classes which, in my own experience, were likely to contain between six and ten pupils incapable of reading the novel by themselves. Somewhat to my surprise and disappointment, such problems were never the subject of any 'post-Bullock' in-service programme. Moreover, at that time I was unable to come up with any discussions of the use of class novels with mixed ability classes in the recommended reading for probationary teachers of English.

In 1978, GEM - Glasgow English Magazine (Number 5, Autumn 1978) - published an article by me about the difficulties of using a class

novel in a mixed ability class. The article ended with an invitation to readers to send in views, ideas or suggestions. As a result of this article, a small working group of Glasgow teachers was set up to examine the use of the class novel with mixed ability classes. This group produced some articles for GEM and some materials for teachers which were designed to be of help when using class novels. The assumption here was that class novels were being used and would continue to be used with mixed ability classes and that what was required therefore was some assistance - unforthcoming from other channels - in overcoming the problems that teachers would face.

My subsequent experience of teaching in three other comprehensive schools (two of them in Glasgow and my present one in Hamilton) confirmed for me that the class novel was an aspect of the teaching of English that warranted specific and detailed study.

1.2 Why Concentrate the Study on First and Second Year ?

There were two main reasons for concentrating the study of class novel use in the first two years of the secondary school (referred to elsewhere throughout this thesis by their Scottish nomenclature of 'S1' for first year and 'S2' for second year). Firstly, it is in these years that classes (in Strathclyde at least) are composed of pupils of all levels of ability. In later years, English classes tend to be more homogeneous thus presenting the teacher with fewer practical problems.

Secondly, external examinations could be expected to affect teachers in the construction of their courses for the later years of the secondary school. Teachers might choose to use class novels because of pressure to prepare pupils for the taking of these exams. I wanted to be able to investigate why teachers chose to use class novels when they were relatively free from such constraints. This would make possible a more wide ranging analysis of the position the class novel occupies in the English curriculum.

As a result of all of this, there were certain issues and certain questions (outlined at the start of the next chapter) that I felt required to be addressed. This present study is an attempt to address them.

1.3 Outline of the Study

This study is in five parts and is structured as follows :

Chapter 2 - a critical survey of the literature in the field;
Chapter 3 - an explanation of how my survey was set up;
Chapter 4 - a report of the findings;
Chapters 5 & 6 - a discussion of the findings;
Chapter 7 - practical implications and future research

Chapter 2 begins by identifying some of the major concerns of the study and sets out to examine the literature in the light of these.

Although the starting point is 1919 (for reasons that will be made clear), some attempt is made at setting the discussion in a historical context by a brief look at the nineteenth century position. Major contributions to this field are then examined in chronological order in order to reveal the sense in which this subject, although frequently commented on over the years, has been consistently ignored by classroom researchers. This, it will be argued in this chapter, has seriously devalued the level of debate over classroom reading and demonstrates the urgent need for more precise classroom research into the use of novels in class.

Chapter 3 describes this survey itself - the type of approach, the development of the questionnaire, the 'key' issues it was aimed at investigating and the nature of the sample.

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the survey in two ways: firstly in terms of 'absolute frequencies' i.e. raw totals of responses to each question; secondly in terms of the 'key' issues identified in Chapter 3.

The next two chapters discuss the findings by relating them to both the 'key' issues of Chapter 3 and to the literature in the field surveyed earlier in Chapter 2.

Chapter 7 suggests some practical implications of the findings for the present day as well as some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2 THE CLASS NOVEL SINCE 1919

There are several issues that need to be addressed at the beginning of a study such as this. Some fundamental ones are these :

1. the historical position of the use of the class novel in the teaching of English;

2. the reasons for its use;

3. the way it is used (methods of reading, types of assignments set on it etc.).

Related to these are a number of questions that concern not so much the use of the class novel in the day to day teaching of English as its status in the English curriculum. Relevant to this are what might be called the 'official' views on the use of the class novel as expressed in government and H.M.I. reports over the years, as well as the treatment of the class novel in the many books and articles on the teaching of English written by various commentators. These, as we shall see in due course, have been almost unanimous in their disapproval of class novels from MacPherson in 1919 to the Bullock Report in 1975. The questions raised therefore are these :

a) Why has there been such consistent disapproval of the use of class novels ?

b) Has such disapproval affected the use of the class novel ? If not, how can we account for such a disparity ?

c) If such a disparity existed, does it still exist today ?

These are all questions which need to be examined. We might begin by considering the literature on the teaching of English to see what work has been done in this field. This firstly entails a brief examination of the historical background to the use of the class novel.

2.1 Historical Background

There is very little evidence about the place of the novel in the English curriculum in the nineteenth century. Indeed, as Lance Dobson has shown in his contribution to the Open University's 'Language in Use' Block 3 'Language Learning and Language Teaching' (1981), evidence about what literature, if any, was taught in schools, is sparse and what there is is unreliable. This is partly because there were problems both of acceptance and of definition of English as a subject in schools and in universities. There was wide variation in the content of English teaching in schools, and though many schools

may have taught literature, often, as Gordon and Lawton (1978) have shown, it seldom took the form of anything more than a sketchy history of English literature with passages from Scripture and the Catechism. English at the secondary school stage was regarded as an inferior subject appropriate for pupils of lower ability, being largely concerned with the teaching of reading. In comparison with philology, for example, the study of English literature was thought to lack academic rigour, a fact reflected at university level by their "tardy and reluctant" (Dobson 1981) acceptance of English as a proper subject for study.

Nevertheless, the study of literature emerged into respectability at the turn of the century when the universities finally began to establish Honours Schools of English and the year 1919 is important because it was in that year that the first major fullscale inquiry into the teaching of English in England was set up. Its findings were published two years later as The Teaching of English in England (H.M.S.O. 1921) - the Newbolt Report.

The Newbolt committee was concerned about what it saw as "The inadequate conception of the teaching of English in this country" (p.4) and in the course of its report tried to argue for the centrality of English in the school curriculum. It was not however a report on the methods of teaching English. As with the nineteenth century, evidence of what actually occured in classrooms is scarce and

unreliable. The other major government investigation into the teaching of English and one which was more concerned with the practice of English teaching was the Bullock Report - A Language For Life (D.E.S. 1975). However, neither of these important and influential reports deals in any detail with the use of class novels by English teachers. In different ways, both reports cover the subject of reading that is done in the classroom, but neither is analytical enough to distinguish between specific forms of classroom reading. In the case of the Bullock Report this is particularly notable since in its fairly full survey, an opportunity was missed to investigate various types of reading activity used in classrooms. Indeed in failing to define precisely the various types of classroom reading and opting instead for the vague and general term 'Reading' done in school, the survey produced data that were very difficult to interpret clearly and which, as I intend to show later in this chapter, may well have led the committee to quite incorrect conclusions about what actually was going on in English classrooms. In any event the report itself scarcely touched on the issue of reading in class, devoting only one small paragraph in Chapter 9 (p.133) to it. In the earlier Newbolt Report there is no specific reference to the use of the class novel at all.

2.2 Lack of Attention

This lack of attention to the use of the class novel is reflected elsewhere in the literature on the teaching of English since 1919. Indeed it is difficult to find any specific references to its use in the literature; very few publications deal with it at all, and the few

publications which do deal with it seem to have received little attention in discussions on English methodology. The one exception is perhaps Calthrop's 1971 study: Reading Together: an investigation into the use of the class reader.

How then is one to account for this neglect of the class novel? One possibility is that the use of class novels is a relatively recent phenomenon and that previous generations of English teachers simply did not use novels in class sets. There is certainly some evidence in the regular government reports during this period which might be taken to support this view. These reports rarely mention the use in class of one novel read by all pupils and when such a method of using the novel is mentioned it is virtually always criticised. This is true of the reports of the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland since 1947 (all of which I have examined). Typical of the kinds of references made there to the reading of fiction in the classroom are these comments from the 1947 report:

"For intensive study, books of graded selections are preferable to complete texts"

and:

"Nor is it necessary that all members of a class should read the same text. Six copies of ten books are far better class equipment than thirty copies of two."

Though critical of class novels, the latter comment here might seem to imply that "thirty copies" of two novels was commonplace. Nevertheless there is no doubt that the impression given by these necessarily general reports is that the use of something like a class novel was to be resisted as being bad classroom practice. Nowhere in any of the government reports that I have looked at is there any encouragement to the teacher to use one novel with the whole class. That is not to say that class novels were never used : they may have been used in spite of official disapproval. But it may be that because the 'official' and therefore the 'professionally acceptable' line was to disapprove of the use of class novels (or "books" as the reports invariably call them - a terminological problem taken up later in this chapter), it is very difficult to find published evidence to the contrary. No 'teacher surveys' were carried out which included such a topic explicitly, though it is possible to 'read between the lines' for evidence on the use of class novels in, for example, Jenkinson (1940) What Do Boys and Girls Read ?. Yet even if such surveys had been carried out, the results may have proved misleading in that teachers, aware of the 'official' attitude to the use of class sets of books, might have been reluctant to admit to doing something in their classroom disapproved of by successive 'official' reports.

So if the use of class novels is a new development in English teaching it is indeed a remarkable development and clearly warrants further investigation. However there is evidence for believing that class novels were indeed used in spite of the 'official' line taken in government reports.

2.3 MacPherson

In the same year as the setting up of the Newbolt inquiry, 1919, a book by William MacPherson was published entitled Principles and Method in the Study of English Literature . In it he devotes a chapter to 'The study of Fiction'and there he complains :

"One defect that commonly marks the mode of procedure in the study of fiction is that much more time than is desirable or necessary is spent in the reading of a novel or romance in class. The book is read aloud from beginning to end..." (p44)

The book is full of practical advice and suggestions for teachers and is clearly the product of a practising teacher. But the interesting point for our purposes about the chapter is that MacPherson assumes the practice of reading one novel with the whole class (indeed TO the whole class) to be common. This might indicate that whatever government reports may or may not have said on the subject, such a method of reading the novel was the norm. MacPherson's phrase "commonly marks" is, it has to be said, not very strong evidence on which to base such a view but it does hint at what was going on in some classrooms. The problem with MacPherson's book in this respect is that it does not produce any detailed evidence about how widespread such a practice was. Nor does he specify at which stage

of secondary school this practice was prevalent, though in his foreword to the book he seems to suggest that what he has to say applied to all stages of secondary school. This problem is also true of the regularly published H.M.I. reports ... they never have accompanying data being essentially impressionistic and general in their treatment of issues. In any case, like the later official reports, MacPherson disapproves of class novels:

"...since usually a work of fiction is of considerable dimensions and only one or two lessons a week can be set apart for the reading of it often a whole year is occupied in the perusal of one book." (p44)

That he should feel the need to condemn this practice in his book is perhaps an indication that its use was widespread. And we do have, in his use of the word "often" here, a hint that such a practice was not unusual. Unfortunately this is the usual standard of evidence for determining how common the use of class novels was.

Interestingly, MacPherson's singling out of the practice of using "one or two lessons a week" for the reading of a class novel strikes a very modern chord. It was just such a method that Whitehead (1966) described as "the traditional way" (p58) of dealing with "class readers" in grammar schools .

MacPherson of course was trying to dissuade teachers from reading novels in this way claiming that such a method limited the whole course of reading, that it was "unnatural and artificial" and that it was unnecessary because the majority of pupils could read it in their own time "in a few weeks". He was dealing with grammar school classes and not with mixed ability classes in which there might be non-readers. The fact that reading aloud in stages took place even with classes where all the pupils could have read the text unaided, perhaps says something about the importance English teachers have always attached to the shared experience of a novel - an importance noted later by Calthrop (1971).

On the other hand it might also point to the class novel's importance as a means of organising the work of a class over a substantial number of English periods. It could be seen as a ready made inter-connected series of lessons though MacPherson clearly disapproves of it lasting a whole year:

"The actual reading of a novel should be done by the pupils outside of class time." (p5)

Though many modern teachers of English might sympathise with this view, the practicalities of mixed ability class groupings have to be

faced up to. A modern teacher of English with a class of mixed ability pupils faces the much more challenging problem of having perhaps a substantial minority of pupils in his class for whom the reading independently of a novel chosen by him for the class as a whole, is quite simply impossible.

For the audience at which it is pitched however, MacPherson's approach is thoroughly practical extending even as far as to suggest a programme of work on a class novel (Black Arrow by R.L.Stevenson). He therefore does not appear to be against using class novels in principle - his objections seem to be about the way they are used. He even devotes a later chapter to the practical issues of reading aloud in class, suggesting how, by moderating the pitch of his voice, the teacher might " awaken any special sentiment" in his pupils. In fact MacPherson comes down in favour of pupils reading aloud in class. But as far as the reading aloud of a NOVEL is concerned, MacPherson makes no attempt to deal with the problems that might arise especially if, as he earlier claimed, the novel might take a whole year to complete. Problems of continuity and absenteeism for example are simply not considered at all.

2.4 Newbolt

However, perhaps a book such as MacPherson's is the wrong place to look for a detailed analysis of the kinds of problems that the use of a class novel might bring. One might perhaps more reasonably expect to find it in a major government inquiry. In 1921 the Newbolt Report was published under the title : The Teaching of English in England (Board of Education 1921). Yet once again one would be disappointed. The report's concern was with the position of English in the education system as a whole. It looked at the historical position of English in the various tiers of the educational system from primary schools to universities and included chapters on Further Education for example, 'English in Commercial and Industrial Life with Special Reference to Continuation and Technical Education' (Chapter V p128). Such a wide ranging remit meant that specific practical problems faced by teachers tended to be ignored, though Chapter IV which dealt with 'Secondary Schools' does contain sections which the 'Contents' describe as a "Survey of English Teaching in Secondary Schools"(pvii - sections covered were Sections 111 to 125). In fact however these sections contain no references to the methods employed by English teachers in the day to day teaching of classes. A later chapter (Chapter IX) on 'Some Particular Aspects of the Teaching of English' is similarly devoid of any practical issues concentrating instead on such "aspects" of teaching English as "The Problem of Grammar" (Sections 254 to 266) or "English and Examinations" (Sections 267 to 283) where the treatment by the report is general and essentially philosophical. The

nearest the report gets to being practical is (perhaps significantly) in Chapter V mentioned above. Part of this chapter is devoted to 'Evening Continuation Schools' (p133) and in Section 141 (p138) reference is made to the use of the novel in class. The report argues here that if a book is to be used "throughout an evening school session" it should be a book which "requires study and deserves it". The report continues :

"It is this consideration which, in general, rules out the novel as the basis of the study of English in evening schools.....if they (novels) are works of art, a taste for them is not promoted by a process of slow study extending over some 25 weeks." (p138)

The objection here is twofold - that where the purpose is to promote "a taste" for novels, the practicalities of limited class contact time make the reading of the novel unnecessarily longwinded and difficult - what MacPherson would have called "unnatural and artificial." Secondly, that novels by their very nature are unsuitable for study. "Novels", as the report goes on, "are written not primarily for our instruction, but to edify and amuse."

What is interesting here from the point of view of the use of class texts is the report's practical objections to the novels. Because novels are long and would have to be studied over "some 25 weeks" they

are not suitable for study. That the report should single this method out for particular attention perhaps indicates something about the extent of its use. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, this method of using a novel is very similar to the method identified by MacPherson (1919) as being true of secondary schools. Yet it would be dangerous to draw too many conclusions about what was widespread practice and what was not as far as the use of class novels was concerned. Suffice it to say that here we have two publications on the teaching of English appearing within two years of each other identifying for specific criticism a very similar method of using novels in class. If such a method was not in common use at that time one might reasonably ask why Newbolt and MacPherson are so specific in their condemnation of it.

Later in the same chapter in Section 148 (p149) which deals with 'The Influence of Literature' (this time in relation to "Day Continuation Schools") other practical problems associated with the teaching of literature are highlighted. The report in fact disapproves of literature being used in class as part of English teaching :

"...literature not being a knowledge based subject, cannot and should not be TAUGHT"
(The emphasis is the report's.)

Literature, according to the report here :

"...makes awkward material for classroom purposes." (p150)

Unfortunately no clear definition of what the report means by "teaching" literature emerges nor indeed is any further explanation given as to why literature is "awkward material" but it seems that the report was worried about the intensive use of works of literature in English classrooms possibly killing off the very thing English teachers wanted to nurture i.e. the love of literature. The atmosphere of a classroom it argued, with its "paraphenalia of study" is one in which "the wings of poesy cannot readily beat". Somewhat confusingly, the report then goes on to say in the very next sentence, that such obstacles can be overcome if literature:

"...be experienced in the way it ought to be, that is through the living voice and by actual impersonation." (p150)

It concludes this section by advocating reading aloud in class as a means of overcoming classroom difficulties :

"Reading aloud, recitation and dramatic performance are the right methods of dealing with literature in school."

This treatment of methodology as far as teaching English is concerned is clearly inadequate from a modern English teacher's point of view. But it is possible to see in the importance given here to reading aloud as a classroom technique, something in common with modern English teachers as we shall see when we look at the results of my survey (see TABLE 9 in 4.1.3 below). Indeed many English teachers today might share the report's concern over the use of literary texts in class in spite of the fact that they may continue to use them even in the lower school where they are not dictated to by national examinations.

Newbolt's was not a report which set out to examine the methodology of English teaching as the list of witnesses examined by the committee (Appendix I p361) makes clear. Perhaps then some confusion over methodological issues was to be expected. The committee was very much in favour of literature being introduced to pupils at school though they did seem to believe that, not being knowledge-based, it could not easily be 'taught' in a direct way. For evidence of what was actually being taught in classrooms we have to look elsewhere.

2.5 Jenkinson

A.J.Jenkinson (1940) provides some such evidence. He deals with the problems of teaching the lower years of secondary schools, a stage which he claimed "nobody knows how to teach" (p6). In his opening chapter he refers to the work of Sampson Lamborn, Elton and Jagger all of whom had written on the teaching of literature but complains that their works were always very general collections of "bright ideas" usually for "bright forms" as he put it.

It is certainly true to say that his book is more concerned with fact than with theory - and he does include an analysis of a survey he carried out (involving some 28 schools) in an attempt to find out what was actually happening. His primary aim was not to find out what was happening in English classrooms however, but :

"...to find out what children aged 12+, 13+, 14+ and 15+ read in their own free time."

Nevertheless there is some evidence in his book of what was used for reading in class. He included in his survey a very brief questionnaire for teachers. Question 2 of this questionnaire related to "books" the children were studying or reading as part of their English course during the term in which the questionnaire was completed. He then made up three tables to analyse the results - one giving a summary of books studied during one term in each of the two types of schools used in the survey; another listing the books studied by four succeeding age

groups in seven Secondary schools in the survey; the last listing the books studied during one term by two succeeding age groups in nine Senior schools in the survey. (The difference between a 'Secondary' school and a 'Senior'school, he deals with in a footnote to Chapter 1 (p7) where he explains that 'Secondary' schools had sixth forms whereas 'Senior' schools did not even have fifth forms.)

Since all but three of the teachers to whom this questionnaire was sent answered it and the questionnaire was sent to 28 schools (17 Senior and 11 Secondary schools - see pp 10-11), we can assume that the data contained in his analysis came from at least 25 schools. This seems a reasonable basis for a survey but there are problems with Jenkinson's sampling as Whitehead (1977) points out, as well as with the fact that he provides neither a clear statistical treatment of his data nor any real analysis. However in terms of taking evidence from practising classroom teachers his is a more fruitful approach for present purposes than the Newbolt report.

The age groups dealt with by Jenkinson of particular interest here are the 12+ and 13+ age groups which correspond to the age groups in the first and second years of the Scottish secondary school today.

Jenkinson claims that the three tables already mentioned (i.e. Table XXXII p118; Table XXXIIIa p120; Table XXXIIIb p124 - all of which are reprinted in Appendix I) :

"...are probably fairly representative of teaching practices in the Senior and Secondary schools of today." (p117)

And Jenkinson was after all, a trainer of teachers who claimed to have seen something of the English teaching of established members of staff "of a great many diverse schools" (p1). That being the case, his findings, particularly about the use of class novels, are worth considering. There is however a problem inherent in the questionnaire. Question 2, which is directed at finding out what was read in class, is framed in a very general way. It reads:

"What books are the children in this class (these classes) studying or reading as part of the English course this term?" (p116)

The problem here is his use of the word "books". This could refer to a whole range of widely differing texts used in class from novels to course books to anthologies of one kind or another. Drawing any firm conclusions about the use or lack of use of any one particular type of book e.g. a novel, is thus very difficult indeed. His subsequent classification of the responses into "prose", "poetry" and "plays" is similarly too vague, particularly in respect of "prose". By failing to be precise in his classification, Jenkinson makes it difficult for the reader to assess the importance or indeed the use of novels in class as opposed to other types of prose works. Indeed, lumped into the "prose" category we find novels, short stories, extracts from novels, extracts from short stories, essays and course books.

Nevertheless the tables do include lists of titles and this makes it possible for us to pick out the various genres in use by the class as a whole. In Table XXXIIIa (Secondary schools) for example, 19 titles are mentioned under "prose" for classes at 12+ and 13+ in the seven schools used for the the compilation of the table. Of these only three titles are novels. In Table XXXIIIb (Senior schools) on the other hand, 47 titles are mentioned under "prose" for classes at 12+ and 13+ in the nine schools used for the compilation of the table. Of these 19 are novels. Even allowing for the fact that two more schools were used for the compilation of this table, this is a marked increase on the number of novels mentioned under the previous table's "prose" heading.

It would appear then that in Jenkinson's questionnaire for teachers, there is some evidence for saying that class novels were more prevalent in Senior schools at the 12+ and 13+ stages than they were at the equivalent stages in Secondary schools. One might speculate as to the reason for this : Senior schools, as Jenkinson himself points out (see p276), tended to deal with more of the lesser able children. The fact that there tended to be greater use of class novels in schools where there were more pupils who might have had learning difficulties, may be significant. Certainly in these schools, unlike MacPherson's grammar schools, fewer pupils would have been able to read novels independently in their own time "in a few weeks" (see 2.3. above) Unfortunately from the point of view of this present

discussion, Jenkinson's survey and subsequent treatment of the data is not sufficiently analytical to answer such a question.

It may have been of course that in the Secondary schools, English as a subject, was simply not taken very seriously as yet, with such things as novels being neglected in favour of grammar. In any event what we have in Jenkinson is the first published evidence taken from practising teachers on this particular topic, albeit indirectly. What Jenkinson does not provide is a direct analysis of how class novels or readers were used.

2.6 Inglis

James Inglis is the recently retired head of the department of English at Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow, the largest teacher training college in Scotland. In response to an enquiry he wrote me a letter in which he summarised his own experience of the place of the class novel in teaching of English in Scotland in the thirties and forties. His experience relates to Senior Secondary schools i.e. selective secondary schools unlikely to have pupils with reading difficulties.

" ...in the thirties (and long after) we did things like David Copperfield's Boyhood (the opening pages of the novel) in the first year. The method was to issue a passage to be read at home and then to proceed from that point to read on and discuss, testing as you went, for understanding and knowledge chiefly at the narrative level."

Here we have an indication of how teachers in the classroom used novels or rather selections from novels. The division of the reading of the text between home and school is worth noting as is the emphasis on literal understanding.

Mr Inglis goes on to describe how in the forties :

"...we studied fairly closely in Class I (first year), Pilgrim's Progress and Gulliver's Travels. These were class readers, home-reading going on quite separately."

In the view of this experienced teacher therefore, class novels were used in the forties and there was something of the kind used earlier.

2.7 Whitehead

In The Disappearing Dais (1966) Frank Whitehead deals with the 'class reader' quite specifically. Though not based on any formal survey, what Whitehead has to say is very interesting in the light of our present discussion because he demonstrates an awareness of the day to day practicalities and implications of the use of class texts absent from earlier works. In particular Whitehead shows concern for the use of class readers in the grammar school. His main argument in Chapter 2 'Reading and Literature' (p24), is that class readers are misused in grammar schools:

"...nowadays we stick to the tradition of the single class reader without apparently feeling very sure of its purpose." (p59)

He examines why teachers choose class readers and displays a concern for precise definition of terms, lacking in earlier works such as Jenkinson (1940), when he asks if the 'reader' is a novel, would it not be more "natural" for the pupils to read it on their own ? By implication he is argreeing with MacPherson's (1919) description of reading in class as being "artificial and unnatural". He goes on :

"Does a novel gain anything by being read aloud in 40 minute sections at weekly intervals." (p59)

Whitehead's complaint against not only the use of class 'readers' but against a quite specific method of reading a class novel is

notable and indicates that class novels and this method of reading them in class were perhaps widespread. In particular his reference (quoted above) to the "tradition of the single class reader" is an implicit recognition of the status the class reader had achieved in the English curriculum in grammar schools. Its use was not only widespread it seems, but it had already acquired in Whitehead's eyes at least, a place in the history of the teaching of English.

In general, Whitehead is clearly against using a single text which he claims is unlikely to be suited to a class in which pupils vary in "intelligence, reading ability and emotional maturity" and stresses instead the importance of "out-of-school reading" (p60). Whitehead, it would appear, sees the use of class readers as a 'threat' to his declared aim which was to individualise the reading of pupils and to encourage home reading. As an alternative to "class readers", he advocates "provision for each class of a mixed set of 'home readers'". He does however see a place for at least one "class reader every year" as an alternative to 'course' books because it would provide for the teacher contextualised passages for detailed consideration. He also suggests that it could form the basis for other English activities such as "adaptation as part of a radio serial" or "composition exercises." However in his discussion of the use of the class reader, Whitehead does assume that most of the reading of the novel would be done out of school :

"...the greater part of the book will clearly have to be read outside lesson time. (p82)

This is no longer quite so clear to the teacher of mixed ability classes in the modern comprehensive system. It may have been possible with grammar school classes in 1966, but it is less so with mixed ability classes in the 1980s (as the discussion of my own survey in Chapter 5 shows).

Whitehead's treatment of the use of the class reader is, nevertheless, refreshingly full of common sense in its approach to the daily business of English teaching. He is aware of the practical implications of what he is saying, identifying at one stage, short stories as being easier to use because they can fit conveniently into 40 minute periods (p81). However he is clearly opposed to the class reader being a major component of the English course and argues persuasively against its use as such. That he should have felt it necessary to launch such a carefully constructed attack on the use of the class reader, against what he saw as flawed current practice in the English classroom, can only lead one to assume yet again that its use was as widespread in his day as it was in the day of MacPherson.

2.8 Holbrook

A year after Whitehead (1966), David Holbrook's English for Maturity was published. Once again this was not a survey of current practice, but it dealt with another area of the English curriculum - the Secondary Modern English curriculum. Whereas Whitehead's concern was for English in the grammar schools, Holbrook's was for English in

the Secondary Moderns (called Junior Secondaries in Scotland). His purpose as stated in the introduction, was to help teachers of English in these schools :

"...consider their work as part of all English teaching"

because they were, as he put it :

"...helping to train the sensibility of three quarters of the nation" (p7)

Holbrook has one or two interesting things to say on the use of the class novel. He says for example :

"A great deal of English time is taken up with the novel"

and goes on to complain about the "lack of usefulness" of this and about children being :

"...dragged through 'Lorna Doone'(everyone supposed to read at the same pace, though their reading ages vary from 8 to 18)" (p152).

Once again the fact that Holbrook singles this practice out for particular criticism would seem to indicate that the use of one novel being read at "the same pace" was not uncommon in the Secondary Modern. Holbrook does not investigate the problems that such a method, if it were common, must have caused; but in now may appear a rather

surprising passage, expresses this view of methodology:

"'Reading round the class', one hopes has gone, and pupils are nowadays divided into groups according to their reading ability, each group having a novel suited to its reading age." (p18)

Holbrook provides no evidence that such an approach was common, nor have I been able to find any such evidence. On the contrary what evidence there is might just as easily lead one to assume the opposite was the case in Secondary Moderns, as Whitehead (1966) implies for the grammar schools. If such a change in methodology had taken place in Secondary Moderns, and was widespread, Holbrook cites no evidence of it.

Therefore, though Holbrook, like Whitehead before him has reservations about the place of the class novel in the English curriculum, neither he nor Whitehead produces any hard evidence of its use or lack of use. The fact that neither was able to cite any such evidence on the use or lack of use of something as important to them as class novels or readers, is both surprising and disappointing, for it indicates an important gap in the research done on the English curriculum. Calthrop's (1971) study was perhaps looked to as plugging that particular gap.

2.9 Calthrop

Reading Together by Kenyon Calthrop (1971) is subtitled : 'An Investigation into the Use of the Class Reader'. It was a N.A.T.E. sponsored "user survey" concerned with what Frank Whitehead in his introduction to it called "the best current practice making use in schools of prose books - novels, short story volumes, biographies etc." Therein lies the problem as far as this present discussion is concerned : once again we are faced with the problem of imprecise terminology. The term "class reader" is used to include not only novels but other prose works. Yet in the text of Calthrop's book there are very few references to prose works that are not novels. In Appendix B for example where he lists "the most popular books reported on " in his survey, of the 28 titles mentioned, all but one are novels (p119). It would thus appear that Calthrop's term "class reader" is very close indeed to being 'class novel' though the lack of precision in this area is clearly less than satisfactory. This problem is a major one in Calthrop's case because much of what he has to say on the subject of the "class reader" is based on his "user survey". This was conducted, so it would appear, on the basis of a questionnaire which was returned by "over 600 teachers" from different parts of the country. But no copy of the questionnaire is included in the book. It is therefore impossible to judge whether or not the problem of imprecise terminology might have affected the responses. It does however seem possible, if not likely, that the one term "class reader" when used to cover "novels, short story volumes, biographies etc" might, depending on how the questions were framed, have posed some

problems for the teachers answering them. This might well have lead to problems at the analysis of results stage. It might have been extremely difficult for example, to extract data on one particular genre like the novel and its use in class, thus making it very difficult to say with any certainty what was being used and why. However since neither the questionnaire used by Calthrop in his survey, nor any teacher responses is actually printed in his book, this critique and interpretation of his investigation can go no further.

In spite of these problems over the terminology used, Calthrop does have some things to say that are of interest to this discussion, although he somewhat irritatingly goes on in Chapter 1 'The Class Reader' to compound the difficulty by referring to the shared experience of reading "a common book" (p2) which all the teachers in his survey felt to be "of great value". If we can assume that this refers to a common novel, then this finding of Calthrop's is an interesting contrast to earlier views of the class novel's demise.

Calthrop goes on in this chapter to deal with another aspect of using class readers i.e. reading aloud in class. Once again however Calthrop's failure to be specific about which type of 'book' the reading aloud relates to is a problem particularly since he seems unaware of the practical problems posed, for both pupils and teacher, by the reading aloud of a novel as against say, a collection of short stories. He nevertheless did note that teachers felt it necessary to do a good deal of the reading aloud themselves - an issue which we

shall return to later (see 4.1.3 TABLE 9).

As 'An Investigation into the Use of the Class Reader', Calthrop's book is disappointing. It fails to identify, much less come to terms with, the central practical issues of using a class novel. Problems such as the length of time needed to read the novel in class, and absenteeism during the reading of the novel in class are hardly touched upon at all and this in spite of the fact that a good third of the book is devoted to two chapters entitled 'Practice'(Chapter 3 p25) and 'More Practice'(Chapter 5 p86). In fact what these chapters contain are detailed accounts of outlines of work on specific novels with only very brief references as to how the novels were read. For example :

"They (the pupils) were asked to keep the book and read it in their spare time." (p38)

or :

"The book was read to the class by me while each child had a copy of the book in front of her." (p46)

No analysis or discussion of these methods of reading is entered into - teachers' methods are merely reported , often in their own words. Not even in the chapter on 'The Less Able' (p72) is there any attempt to discuss the very real problems that would arise for such pupils if, for example, the latter of the two methods mentioned above

was employed with them especially if, as seems likely, some of them would miss part of the reading aloud through absence. This omission is all the more surprising on Calthrop's part since the method in question was employed, as he himself makes clear, by a teacher of 12 year old girls in a Secondary Modern school where one might have expected the problem of the less able pupil to have been more acute.

Chapter 4 'The Less Able' does deal in some detail with the way individual teachers treated novels with classes of less able pupils but only the very briefest reference is made to the method of reading and none at all to the problems that arose. This chapter in fact, anecdotal in tone, amounts to little more than a recommendation with teachers's notes, of two novels suitable for use as class texts with classes of less able pupils.

It could be argued that Calthrop is doing as much as he set out to do i.e. he is uncovering and publicising what Whitehead in his introduction called "the best current practice". His concern is not with the problems encountered in using class readers, but with the successes. Nevertheless, any "investigation" to be worthy of the name, would have to consider key problem areas and should certainly provide the evidence to support any points made. The failure of Calthrop's book to present both the questionnaire used in the survey and the findings is a major weakness.

To be fair however, Calthrop does make reference to some practical problems of using class readers. Interestingly enough he does so at

the end of his chapter on 'Theory' (p22) in a section headed 'A Dissenting View'. Here he deals with objections to the use of class readers from teachers in his survey. He neither specifies the number of objectors nor attempts to evaluate their significance in terms of his survey as a whole, but he does identify three main problems raised by the objectors to the use of class readers. Firstly, these teachers argued that compelling a class of varied tastes and abilities to read one and the same novel would produce a negative reaction from "at least half of the class". Calthrop replies by citing his own survey findings of pupils' responses (the only part of his survey laid out in any detail - see p111 to p118) which do not bear out this criticism. It is nevertheless a matter of concern to teachers and not just to teachers who oppose the use of class novels. Secondly, it was argued by teachers Calthrop spoke to that the problem of children reading at very different speeds and with varying degrees of enthusiasm were "insurmountable". This very important practical point is not investigated by Calthrop - he brushes it aside claiming that the individualising of reading for a class poses just as many problems. That may or may not be the case, but if Calthrop is really 'investigating' the use of the class reader, one might have expected a more lengthy and more detailed treatment of this point. Thirdly, he reports the argument from one 'anti-class reader' teacher that even if he wanted to use class readers the difficulties of gaining access to "class sets" of novels would deter him. Clearly one objection of this kind would not be significant; but no evidence is produced on whether access, by other teachers in the survey, to class sets of novels was a problem (although this chapter ends with a footnote reference to the

University of Newcastle Institute of Education's 1964 survey of local secondary schools which concluded that in the North East at least, teachers relied "fairly heavily" on class sets of prose readers (p24)). Calthrop concludes this section by saying that it was difficult to estimate how widespread the reaction against class readers was. But he perhaps was looking for the wrong thing - it may have been that an investigation into some of the difficulties posed by class readers would have proved more fruitful than a search for outright opposition to its use. In any event if he wanted to estimate how widespread opposition to its use was, he might have considered the regularly published government reports on English from Newbolt onwards which certainly did nothing to encourage its use and sometimes explicitly condemned it. The indifference and at times hostility found, in commentators from MacPherson to Holbrook and continued, as we shall see, in Bullock (1975) may explain why some of the teachers Calthrop interviewed "in depth"(p23) and who supported the use of the class reader felt on the defensive. Calthrop's apparent surprise at this might have been obviated had he been more assiduous in his treatment of the 'Historical Background' in Chapter 1 (p1) where he refers only to Jenkinson (1940). It is a dissappointingly superficial treatment of the history of the topic in a book devoted entirely to an investigation of the class reader.

Calthrop noted that opposition to the use of class readers came from teachers "nearly all of whom" taught in what he describes as "highly selective grammar or independent schools" (p24). Once again he does not investigate why this was so and because he produces no figures or

tabulated data from his survey, it is impossible for the reader of his book to assess the significance of this finding. Had he done so it might have been possible to consider, for example, the link between this finding and the fact that, as we have seen, in Jenkinson's survey class novels appear to have been less prevalent in 'Secondary' as opposed to 'Senior' schools. A link with Holbrook's observation that a great deal of time in the Secondary Modern school was taken up with the novel (see above) might similarly have been investigated. The absence of systematically collated data makes this impossible. He also mentions (in a footnote to page three of Chapter 1), that one Head of Department in a Secondary Modern he visited felt that using a class novel "...was of such value that it helped in the discipline of the school" - this comment suggests a link between the use of the class novel and discipline which might have been worth following up; it relates to other suggestions mentioned here about class novels perhaps being more prevalent where there is a greater proportion of less able pupils. One might suggest that a class novel, especially if it is read aloud to the class, overcomes for the teacher the problem of having pupils with reading difficulties in the class who would be unable to read the novel independently and who might, if left to do so, pose a discipline problem. Overcoming the problem of having pupils in the class who would be unable to read the novel unaided was a reason for using reading aloud as a means of getting through the class novel which came up in my survey, as we shall see later, in relation to mixed ability classes (see 4.1.11 TABLE 20). Thus it could be argued that the reading aloud of a class novel with a class in which there were pupils with reading difficulties could be a disciplining

measure in that it might aid class control since the pupils would have to remain silent while the reading aloud proceeded.

In neither the "highly selective grammar or independent schools" mentioned by Calthrop nor in the 'Secondary' schools mentioned by Jenkinson would this problem have existed. The prevalence of class novels in these schools might therefore have been reduced.

Thus apart from the "shared experience" argument, which Calthrop earlier identified as a key reason given by teachers for choosing to use a class reader there may have been more pragmatic reasons for its use.

Calthrop also makes reference to the use of a novel by one teacher who spent "four periods a week for ten weeks" (pp 37-38) on work based on the class reader. Though we are not told how long the periods were or what proportion of the total English time this took up, we can assume it to have been substantial. Yet crucial practical problems that must have arisen over this period such as absenteeism, are not mentioned at all. Nor is there any indication whatever in the scheme of work so meticulously laid out (pp 34-37 and pp 38-40) of how such problems would be dealt with.

Calthrop's treatment of the class reader therefore, though greatly to be welcomed as a major study of the subject, is unsatisfactory in a number of important respects.

2.10 The Bullock Report

It might have been hoped that the shortcomings of Calthrop (1971) would be rectified with the publication of A Language for Life (D.E.S. 1975), the Bullock Report. And indeed in Part Nine of the report we have what the report itself calls :

"... the most comprehensive survey ever undertaken in this country of the teaching of various aspects of English." (p359)

Over 2000 schools were used in the survey and some 422 were secondary schools. Of these some 392 replied to the questionnaire, which itself was very detailed, identifying as it did some 45 specific activities in school and some 28 homework activities with the declared aim of obtaining "a very detailed picture of English teaching) (p364). Yet in spite of this enormous collection of data, it is very difficult indeed to derive a clear picture of reading in class from the report and in particular the reading (or lack of it) of class novels.

The problem, as with Calthrop, Jenkinson, Newbolt and MacPherson, is partly one of classification. If for example, we look at the 'Secondary School Questionnaire: 12 Year Olds - Part 2 The Individual Pupil: 12-13 Age group'(pp 484 - 502) we can see how this problem of classification inhibits a clear interpretation of the data. Part of this questionnaire relates to 'Time Spent on Different Activities' and these are writing, oral English, language study and reading. For each 'activity' there are two sections; 'In School' and 'Homework'. If we

look in particular at the section 'Reading : In School'(p492) the problem is evident. Here the classification of reading done in school is very vague. By classifying the reading done in school as being reading "of fiction", "of non-fiction", "of poetry" and "of drama", no clear picture of the nature of classroom reading emerges. The reading "of fiction", for example, could relate to novels, short stories, extracts from novels, extracts from short stories, simplified or abridged novels or short stories, anthologies and so on. The variety of types of fiction available for reading in school may be matched by the variety of reading strategies available to the teacher. In part, the nature of the genre may influence the way the text is to be read. A short story, for example , may lead the teacher to use a quite different reading strategy from a novel - reading aloud to the class for example, as opposed to silent reading. It is impossible to assess the importance of the novel in the pupil's classroom reading from the data given here; but it is equally difficult to assess the importance of 'class' as opposed to 'individualised' reading in school from this data. Yet in the report itself there is the claim that :

"In recent years there has been a welcome growth in the practice of wide individualised reading within a class." (9.19 p132)

Whether such a growth should be welcomed given the limited time a pupil spends in an English classroom in any one week, is a question we can leave aside for the moment. What is of more concern here is the evidence for such a claim. It may be that this is merely another way of saying that the use of class texts is to be resisted as being old

fashioned and on the decline; but if we examine the claim as it stands, it is very difficult to find evidence in the report's own survey to substantiate this claim. If we take the data from the questionnaire for the 'Individual Pupil: 12-13 Age Group', mentioned above, relating to 'Reading : In School' (which refers to reading done in the classroom) we find the following :

	Minutes				
	0	1-30	31-60	61-90	91-120
Private Reading of Fiction	495	306	125	13	0
Class Reading of Fiction (with teacher) leading to :					
a) group discussion	813	84	40	2	0
b) class discussion	492	296	137	13	1

<The figures are numbers of pupils - see Bullock (1975) - page 492>

On the face of it this seems to bear out the report's claim that there has been a growth in "individualised reading" in class: after all 444 (i.e. 306 + 125 + 13) of the 939 pupils covered by the survey spent between 1 and 90 minutes of class time (in the week of the survey) in the private reading of fiction. This seems to have been the interpretation put on the data by the committee in 9.19. But is this the only possible interpretation ? It is quite possible for example, that some (or much) of the "private reading of fiction" was in fact private reading of a class novel or other text chosen by the teacher for the class as a whole. There is an important difference between the

reading "of fiction" chosen by the TEACHER for the class as a whole for individualised reading in class, and the reading "of fiction" chosen individually by each PUPIL for individualised reading in class which is not at all clear here. The report's failure to take account of this important point makes it impossible to assess the distinction between individualised reading where the choice of text is the pupil's responsiblity and other methods of organising classroom reading.

It is also worth noting here that the findings of Dolan, Harrison and Gardner published in Lunzer and Gardner (1979) seem to conflict with Bullock on this point. They found that :

"...only 10% of reading observed at first year secondary level would meet a minimum criterion for being termed continuous" (p125).

And in any case whether there was a lot of individualised reading going on in class or not in Bullock's survey, it is difficult to see, in the data provided, evidence of the "growth" in such a practice: the tables such as the one quoted above, do not show anything about changes over time.

It is similarly impossible to come to any firm conclusions about the use of the novel in classroom reading, based on this data, owing to imprecision in classification mentioned above. Yet, in 9.19, in its only specific reference to the "class novel", the Bullock Report is critical of what it describes as "the collective reading of the class novel" going on to state :

"Its greatest disadvantage is that it usually entails a slow plod in which the pupils' experience of the book is parcelled out over a term at weekly intervals". (p133)

The evidence for claimimg that it "usually entails a slow plod" or that the novel is "parcelled out over a term at weekly intervals" certainly is not clear from the data produced by the survey in Part Nine. But it is interesting that Bullock should be so specific about the method used for the reading of the class novel - the claim that the reading of the book "usually entails" it being read "at weekly intervals" for example. Though this is the method much criticised by MacPherson (1919) and Whitehead (1966), as we have already seen, there is certainly no evidence in Bullock's own survey to support the view that such a method was "usual" or common. Nor, it is true, is there any evidence to the contrary - the fact is that in the survey no attempt was made to investigate specific methods of reading class (or any other type of) novel. (My own survey has some interesting findings on this very point as we shall see later.)

What is also notable about this section of the report is the fact that the "collective reading of the class novel" is accepted as being "the standard, indeed the exclusive procedure" in what the report somewhat vaguely refers to as "many schools" (9.19 p133). The absence from the questionnaire of any specific reference to the class novel is therefore very surprising and is indeed a major weakness of the secondary questionnaire. It would, for example, have been useful to

know in precisely how many schools the collective reading of the class novel was the "standard" or the "exclusive" procedure. It would also have been valuable to have had some data on the relative importance of the class novel as opposed to other approaches to English teaching, in the "lower and middle school" to which the report refers.

The Bullock Report can therefore be placed firmly in the tradition of official (and other) publications on English teaching which, while implicitly recognising the widespread use of the class novel, fail to examine its use in detail but go on to condemn its use in general. The remit of the Bullock committee makes its failure to discriminate between the various types of classroom reading and the various methods of reading all the more disappointing. It could be argued that if one is setting out to investigate the various aspects of the teaching of English in "the most comprehensive survey ever undertaken" and fails to clarify the position on something as basic and central to English teaching as classroom reading practices, then at the very least, an opportunity has been missed.

2.11 Schools Council Research

The final report of the Schools Council Research Project into Children's Reading Habits 10 - 15 Children and their Books Whitehead (1977) deals with classroom reading practices to a certain extent. As well as producing a questionnaire for children (which we shall look at

shortly) the research team sent out a questionnaire for Heads of English Departments in the various types of secondary schools involved in the survey. Using the data which resulted from this questionnaire, a section of Chapter 3 was devoted to : 'Type of Book Provision in English Lessons' (p95). The first question of the questionnaire asked Heads of Department to tick statements about types of book provision in their departments - separately for pupils at 12+ and 14+. Four of the categories offered in this question relate to "sets" of books classified as follows :

" a) Class sets of course books or comprehension books are used.

b) Class sets of English thematic or topic-based anthologies are used.

c) Class sets of novels, short stories or other prose books are used.

d) Small sets (say 5-10 copies) of novels, short stories or other prose books are used within the class." (p322)

Reporting on the results of this particular part of the questionnaire in Chapter 3 (p96), the report says that three different ways of analysing the answers to this question were tried, claiming that :

"...the only one to differentiate consistently in regard to amount of book reading was the categorisation of schools into two groups: the vast majority which ticked either a) or b) or both, and those -

relatively few in number - which ticked neither a) nor b)."

Although not specifically isolated in the category, it would have been very interesting nevertheless to have known how many schools ticked c) (and any other option). This would have given us some indication of the status of the class novel in secondary schools. Unfortunately this is not possible. Similarly disappointing from the point of view of this present discussion, is the report's failure to give 'raw totals' of responses for each statement which might well have been very illuminating in this instance.

The report then goes on to say that the "interesting feature" to emerge was that the amount of voluntary book reading was lower (both at 12+ and at 14+) in the schools that used class sets of either course books, comprehension books or thematic anthologies. Another interesting feature that one might suggest here is that no such finding is reported in respect of those schools which used class sets of "novels, short stories or other prose works". Indeed the report goes on to suggest that if the development of wide independent reading is central to the aims of English teaching, then this will be most effectively achieved by a

"concentration in English lessons upon the reading of 'real' books "novels, short stories and other complete prose works)". (p98)

Though falling short of what one could regard as an endorsement of the use of class novels, this is a change of emphasis from the interim

report - Whitehead (1975) - published two years earlier where, in the final section, is to be found the following statement :

"The enormous variety of children's individual choices and preferences lends support to the now widespread practice of catering for their needs by means of an individualised reading scheme rather than by class sets of books." (p47)

The claim made here, that the variety of children's choices and preferences when it comes to reading, is somehow linked to the decline in the use of class sets of books in the English class, has been modified in the final report in a quite significant way. By being able to distinguish between types of class sets the final report can be more specific in what it has to say on the subject of classroom reading. The problem of course, is that it is not quite specific enough as far as the class novel is concerned. Lumping it together with "short stories" and "other prose books" makes it more difficult to say with any real accuracy, whether or not individualised reading is or is not affected.

One other aspect of this report is worth commenting on: it relates to the influence of the school on children's reading. In the 'Children's Questionnaire' reprinted in Appendix II (p303), pupils were asked about books they claimed to have read in the previous four weeks. In response to the question :

"Where did you get the book from?"

the pupils were offered seven possible sources and were asked to tick one for each book read. The options were as follows :

"I got it from the class library
I got it from the school library
I got it from the public library
It belongs to me
I borrowed it from a friend
I borrowed it from someone in the family
I got it from somewhere else"

Two possible criticisms occur to me here. Firstly the question does not seem to allow for the possibility of pupils having read books in class as part of a class novel exercise. The phrase "get books from" seems to imply a personalised acquisition of the texts for individualised reading. Yet it is quite possible, as we have seen earlier, for pupils to be asked to read individually in class, a novel selected by the teacher for the class as a whole.

Secondly, the list of possible sources does not cater for the possibility of pupils including on the list of books they claimed to have read in the previous four weeks, novels that were in fact read aloud TO them by a teacher in class. In the account of the results, no mention is made of these potentially distorting factors.

In spite of the shortcomings of the survey - shortcomings admitted

to in the report itself (see pp 98-99) - the questionnaire did at least ask about "class sets of novels" which marks it out from the Bullock questionnaire. But it has to be said once again that the treatment of the class novel even here is unsatisfactory for present purposes.

2.12 Maxwell

One slightly more recent (and more limited) survey is worth considering and is of particular interest here since it is a Scottish survey. James Maxwell's Reading Progress from 8 to 15 (1977) is admittedly an attempt to analyse "progress" in reading as measured by standardised tests, but it does contain a chapter on 'Reading in Secondary School' (Chapter 7 pp 77 - 86) which itself has a section headed 'Teachers' Practices in S1 and S2 Classes'. This has some statistics on 'Oral Reading' and 'Formal Silent Reading' but unfortunately from the point of view of this discussion, these include teachers of all subjects and not just English. Nor, unfortunately is there any reference to WHAT is being read in these particular ways, so it is impossible to say anything definite about the use of class novels. However, at the end of the chapter in question, Maxwell reports this finding :

"About half the secondary schools have abandoned the use of class readers and all have some novel reading as part of the English course" (p86)

We are faced here once again with a problem of terminology, though it is clear from the context that when Maxwell uses the phrase "class readers" he is referring to such things as course books or books which contain a variety of passages for interpretation. His statement does imply therefore that novels were becoming a more significant part of the English curriculum in the lower years of the secondary school (S1 and S2) even though it is not possible to say from Maxwell's evidence whether this meant a development in the use of "class" novels or simply novels used in a variety of ways.

2.13 Dolan, Harrison and Gardner

In The Effective Use of Reading ed. E.Lunzer and K.Gardner (1979), the contribution of T.Dolan, C.Harrison, and K.Gardner looked promising as far as information on the use of the class novel was concerned - their chapter was called : 'The Incidence and Context of Reading in the Classroom' (p108) mentioned earlier in relation to Bullock (D.E.S.1975). However somewhat disappointingly for present

purposes, it fails to consider what was being read. Though concerned with "the actual reading tasks a pupil undertakes during the school day" (p108), no reference is made to class novels as being one of the reading tasks. Admittedly the authors were concerned with the relative importance of reading in different parts of the curriculum; but even when specific reference is made to English, no mention is made of the types of books that were read. When, for example, they report that :

"In Secondary English ..... it was not uncommon for a good part of a lesson to be based on a passage being read aloud, usually with each child following the text from a book or worksheet." (p121)

We have no way of knowing whether this might have been part of the reading of a class novel. As with the other surveys we have looked at, the detailed information needed to examine the place of the class novel in the English classroom is missing.

2.14 Protherough

Robert Protherough's Developing Response to Fiction (1983) includes a section entitled 'Practice : Five Case Studies' in which two studies by practising teachers concerned with the use of the

"class reader" in the first two years of secondary school are discussed. What is particularly interesting as far as this present discussion is concerned, is that both teachers were referring to mixed ability classes. Though the teachers' approaches to the use of the respective novels differed, they did share some common ground on the way the novels were read. The first, John Foggin, explained that one of the things he was putting "emphasis" on was "reading aloud" and explained that he read aloud himself the first part of the book (p60). The second teacher, Keith Bardgett, was more explicit:

"...I read the whole book to them aloud, with them following in their copies." (p75)

This is a rare statement indeed and the teacher clearly felt that some explanation was required, as he continued :

"...I make no apologies for this traditional approach. It provides a valuable shared experience, ensures that the poorer readers' enjoyment of the story is not hampered by technical difficulties, and most important of all, I am able to transmit my own enthusiasm." (p75)

There are two particular points to note here : in the first place, the reading aloud of the whole novel is described here as a

"traditional approach" implying that, in the opinion of this teacher at least, novels being read aloud in their entirety had been widespread though, as noted earlier, subject to criticism as being old fashioned. Secondly, the reasons given by this teacher for reading the novel aloud are reasons that figure very largely in my own survey, as we shall see in due course.

The evidence in this book of the use of the class novel therefore, though sparse, may be regarded as significant because it comes from classroom teachers and seems to indicate that some classroom practice was at odds with the 'official' view.

2.15 Jackson

David Jackson's book Encounters with Books : Teaching Fiction 11 - 16 (1983) is notable in that it assumes mixed ability classes in its discussion of the use of fiction in English classrooms. He deals quite specifically with the use of a class novel with such a class. Somewhat surprisingly however, he does not deal in any detail with the problems that using class novels might pose. In Chapter 5 'Fresh Ways of Working with Texts' for example he discusses his approach to the use of a class novel with a group of 11 year olds. He describes his moethod of reading thus :

" I read the book with this particular group over a period of three weeks, sometimes reading two or three chapters to them, at other times asking them to get up to a particular place by reading so many pages for homework." (p112)

This method of reading the class novel clearly assumes that all the pupils in the class are able to read the novel independently at home. We must therefore assume that either there were no pupils in this particular class for whom the independent silent reading of the novel chosen by the teacher for the class as a whole was a problem; or that they existed in such small numbers that Jackson did not consider them a problem; or that a problem resulting from the presence in the class of pupils unable to read the novel unaided, did not occur to Jackson. Since no detailed description of the reading abilities of the pupils is provided, it is not possible to judge.

Nevertheless, it is perhaps worth commenting here, that in a book which does at least deal with the use of a class novel with a mixed ability class, the author does not find it necessary either to describe the reading abilities of the class or to attempt to assess the problems that might be caused by having present in the class while the class novel is being used, some pupils unable to read the novel independently by themselves.

2.16 English 5 to 16

In English from 5 to 16 H.M.S.O. (1984) - an H.M.I. discussion paper - there is a brief but interesting reference to "the class reader" as well as a fleeting but positive reference to "group" reading. This paper, intended as a contribution to the process of developing general agreement about curricular aims and objectives, is understandably general and philosophic with chapter headings such as 'The Aims of English Teaching' and 'Some Principles of English Teaching'. But some indication of the Inspectorate's view of class novels may be gleaned from, for example, this statement in Chapter 4 - a chapter which is headed 'Some Principles of Assessment':

"It is all too common to find that the reading of junior and secondary pupils is assessed in terms of their ability to perform 'comprehension exercises' on out-of-context passages in text books or on work cards, rather than on their response to, say, the class reader, to newspaper and magazine articles, or to informational material, such as brochures, of the kind that they do or will need to use." (4.12 p20)

Leaving aside the rather functional view of English which this seems to imply, it is nevertheless one of the very few positive references to the use of class novels that I have been able to find in this kind of 'official' document. The reference here to the use of the class 'reader' (again an imprecise phrase though its context here seems to

imply that it means 'fiction'), is uncritical. Indeed it would appear from this reference that its use is being not only taken for granted, but recommended, at least in so far as it can provide opportunities for 'in-context' assessment of reading. This would seem to be similar to the justification offered by Whitehead (1966) (and mentioned above) for using a class novel - Whitehead suggested one such text per year whereas here no such specific suggestion is made. Quite how a 'class reader' could provide for a better assessment of reading is a more complex question. It would surely have to depend on exactly how the novel (always assuming that is what is meant by 'reader') is read by the class. There is evidence that much of the reading of the novel, at least in secondary school, might be reading aloud to the class as a whole by the teacher. This would have serious implications for the use of such a text in the assessment of reading - implications of which this document seems unaware.

However, taken with the document's earlier statement that :

"The ability to read responsively and critically should be fostered by group attention to a range of reading matter" (3.16 p15)

it is possible to say that 'group' reading of a text is not entirely disapproved of - the obvious problems as far as this discussion is concerned being the lack of a precise definition of 'group' here and

the total absence from the document of any specific reference to novels.

2.17 Scottish 10 - 14 Report

Education 10 - 14 in Scotland (1986) is a report by the Scottish Consultative Committee on the Curriculum. It is a study of the educational provision in Scotland for the last two years of primary school and the first two years of secondary school. Though not therefore a report specifically on the teaching of English in these years, it might be expected to offer some insight into the English curriculum traditionally thought to be so important in the upper primary and lower secondary school.

The first thing to be said about this report as far as the present discussion is concerned, is that it contains no specific reference to the use of novels in class - whether 'class' or individually-read novels. Indeed in the whole report there are few references to the place of any kind of literature in the '10 - 14' curriculum though there are sections on 'Language Development' (5.14 p30), 'Expressive and Appreciative Activity' (6.61 p62) - a section largely devoted to arguing the case for drama in the curriculum - and four sections on 'Communicating' subtitled respectively : 'Understanding Language'

(6.73-82, p65), 'The Contribution of Foreign and Classical Languages' (6.83-87, p66), 'The Mass Media' (6.88, p67), and 'Graphical Awareness' (6.89, p68). The picture of English presented by this report is essentially utilitarian - it is seen as a means to an end, hence the emphasis on 'language' and what the report calls "the operational knowledge of language" (6.73 p65). In Chapter VIII 'Ways and Means', the report calls for the limiting of time allocated to language subjects (English is lumped together with Modern and Classical languages here) so that young learners may be equipped "with skills for life in contemporary society" by studying "technological, practical, aesthetic and physical activities" (8.58 p77).

Given this context it is perhaps not surprising that nothing is said about the use of novels in classes at the '10 - 14' stage. Less surprising and of more concern perhaps is the fact that the report has very little to say about the development of reading. In the report's 'Conclusions and Recommendations' (Chapter XIV pp 183 - 195) for example, there are no specific recommendations about reading development and how it should proceed other than rather general exhortations to primary schools such as the one in 14.11 (p184) to "develop the skills and capacities involved in active learning". This may of course have implications for classroom reading but the report's apparent lack of attention to the detail of this important area contrasts sharply with its quite specific recommendations on, for example, the teaching of "keyboard skills" (14.12 p184) or the "constructive use of both calculators and micro-computers" (14.17 iv,

p185). There are no such detailed references to the content of the English curriculum and no reference whatever to the place of the novel in it.

2.18 The Kingman Report

A recent major report on the teaching of English is the 'Kingman Report' H.M.S.O. (1988). Its terms of reference were to inquire into The Teaching of English Language and might therefore be considered an unlikely place for references to the use of novels in class. Yet it does have some things to say about literature, though none specific enough to throw any further light on classroom reading. In Chapter 2 'The Importance of Knowledge about Language' (pp 7-15) there is a section on 'Language in relation to aesthetic development' (p11), where literature appears to be seen by the committee as of interest primarily as a source of "aesthetic properties of language" (21. p11). Wide reading is seen here as essential :

"to the full development of an ear for language and to a full knowledge of the range of possible patterns of thought and feeling made accessible by the power and range of language." (21. p11)

The report then goes on to say that it is important for children to "read and hear and speak the great literature of the past" (21. p11)

and expresses concern that "a generation of children will grow up deprived of that entitlement" (22. p11). What is missing from the report is any recognition of the practical implications of what is being advocated here. Some important questions immediately spring to mind such as : is it envisaged that EVERY child should read the great literature of the past ? Perhaps the inclusion of the phrase "read and hear" is an implicit recognition of the importance of reading aloud to a class, a novel chosen by the teacher but which some pupils would find impossible to read silently by themselves. Unfortunately as far as the present discussion is concerned, this is as explicit as the report gets on classroom reading.

The report's concern that English lessons should become more than settings for "vigourous and social discussion" (24. p12) is interesting however, since what is advocated in the subsequent section is a treatment of literature where authorial purposes and techniques should have a higher priority. As we shall see in due course, there is evidence that teachers of English largely ignore such issues in setting assignments on class novels in the first two years of secondary school.

This report then, offers very little insight into the position of the class novel in the English curriculum.

2.19 CONCLUSION

What are we to make of all of this ? One thing is immediately striking - it seems remarkable to a Scottish teacher of English such as I that there appears to be no specifically Scottish dimension to this whole subject in spite of the fact that Scotland has always prided itself on its separate educational system and in spite of the fact that reports such as the Newbolt report were quite specifically about the teaching of English in England, as opposed to Scotland or the United Kingdom.

In a more general sense several points might be made. The first is that teachers of English have indeed been using class novels or class 'readers' for a very long time.

Secondly, there can be no doubt that the treatment of the class novel in the literature on the teaching of English is inadequate. It would appear that although as early as 1919 its use in English classrooms was apparently taken for granted, successive government reports, official surveys and generations of commentators on the English curriculum have failed to clarify its position in the day to day work of the teacher of English. This has been due in part to simple oversight and in part to some imprecision (not to say sloppiness) in the framing of questionnaire questions in major surveys of what was happening in English classrooms. It may also be due in part to the fact that many of the commentators we have looked have

been arguing a case rather than objectively analysing. More recent publications have given some consideration to the use of class novels or class readers but even the most influential of them (notably Whitehead (1966), Holbrook (1967) and Bullock (1975)) are plagued by imprecision and assumption. The one specific study of the class reader we have examined, Calthrop (1971) is similarly flawed.

Thirdly, the question of quite why the class novel has continued to have such an appeal for teachers of English has never been satisfactorily tackled. Even if the earlier surveys and studies had been more satisfactory, there would still be a gap in the literature today. For English teachers in the 1980s the classroom world is very different from that of earlier decades: the advent of mixed ability comprehensive classes, particularly in the lower years of the secondary school, has brought with it a new range of challenges and difficulties for the teacher of English. This is particularly true in the field of classroom reading. Organising the reading for a class that might contain a range of reading abilities from the illiterate to the highly skilled, is a very different and much more complex operation and one that perhaps might have bewildered earlier generations of teachers of English. This has produced a situation in which the problems of using a single class text such as a class novel are thrown into starker relief. If class novels are still in use today with the kinds of classes mentioned above, then there is a greater need than ever before for information that is clear and unambiguous about the reasons, aims, methods, techniques and strategies employed by teachers using them.

CHAPTER 3 THE INVESTIGATION

3.1 The Need for a New Investigation

Two things are revealed by an examination of the literature on the teaching of English since 1919. One is that no specific and detailed investigation into the use of class novels has been undertaken. The other is that the position of the class novel in relation to mixed ability classes in the first and second years of the secondary school has been largely ignored.

This is surprising given the importance that has traditionally been attached to the class novel or 'reader' over decades (as we have seen). But what is also surprising is the general lack of attention it receives in the research literature on classroom reading. More notable perhaps, is the lack of attention given to the advent of mixed ability class groupings in the lower years of the comprehensive school and their impact on classroom reading methodology. The incidence and context of classroom reading in secondary schools seem bound to have been affected by the change from streamed or set classes to mixed ability classes. Therefore, to fail to take account of the type of class when looking at classroom reading, is to fail to take account of a major element of the context of the reading.

What seemed to me to be required therefore was an investigation which set out quite specifically to look at the use of class novels in mixed ability classes. The study was made of in the first and second years of secondary school (called respectively S1 and S2 in Scotland). These years were chosen because unlike the later years of the secondary school, teachers are free to choose what texts they wish to use with their classes wthout reference to the demands of an external examination. Secondly, mixed ability classes are more prevalent in the first and second years of comprehensive schools - in later years there is a greater tendancy to 'set' pupils according to ability with a view to preparing them for external examinations. Free of these potentially distorting influences, it might be possible to investigate the use of the class novel in English classrooms.

In particular I wanted to investigate three key issues :

1. the extent of the use of the class novel in S1 and S2 and the importance accorded to it;

2. the methods of reading the class novel;

3. the types of assignments set on the class novel.

Where the first of these issues was concerned, I was interested in finding out the class novel's importance in relation to other possible components of the English course. I was also specifically interested in looking at the class novel's position in relation to time spent in class on various activities and so the word 'importance' was defined on the Final Questionnaire for teachers (as we shall see in due course) as meaning importance "in terms of time spent in class". Having established that, I was interested in two other aspects of this issue. Firstly the REASONS teachers had for devoting class time to the class novel and secondly the PROBLEMS that arose as a result of opting to use a class novel with a mixed ability class.

Likewise with the second of the issues mentioned above, I was interested in establishing the relative importance of the various possible methods of reading the class novel. Once again 'importance' was defined quite precisely on the Final Questionnaire as referring to the method by which "most pages of the novel were read". This depended of course on being able to define precisely the possible options available to the class teacher when it comes to reading in class. This, as far as I am aware, has never been done before in a survey of classroom practice, yet it is vital for understanding what precisely is going on as far as classroom reading is concerned.

In any event as we shall later, I was able to define seven possible methods of reading in class. But I was also keen to make a particular

study of one of the seven possible methods i.e. reading aloud, a method of reading in class that has been much commented on in the literature as we have seen. Yet the literature on classroom reading treats the business of reading aloud in class too vaguely. In fact, as we shall see, there are various TYPES of reading aloud each quite distinct from the other. The tendency in the literature to treat reading aloud as if it were one easily identifiable method is one I avoided. Thus when I came to look at this, I treated each of the methods separately and asked teachers for reasons for choosing to adopt the particular method they used and then asked them about the problems, notably the problem of pupil absence while the reading aloud of parts (or all) of the class novel was proceeding.

Where the third key issue was concerned I was similarly interested in discovering the relative importance of various types of assignment set on the class novel. Again this meant defining for teachers several types of assignment but this time (as will be seen shortly) I included an 'other' option in case the types offered did not suit. Once again, as with the two previous issues, the term 'importance' was defined on the Final Questionnaire as referring to "the type of assignment upon which pupils spent most class time". I was also able to look at some of the problems associated with setting assignments on a class novel for a mixed ability class particularly where there were pupils present in the class who would be unable to read the novel unaided.

3.2 Type of Approach

Having decided what was needed, the next thing to consider was how to obtain the required information. Observation was ruled out on practical grounds - it would not have been possible for me to arrange time off from my own teaching to observe a number of other teachers of English work. Similar difficulties would have been posed by interviewing teachers of English (although I was able to interview a limited number briefly at a later stage). I decided on a questionnaire based survey of English teachers. Since in the use of class novels all the important decisions are taken by the teacher - from choice of text to method of reading - a carefully drawn up questionnaire for teachers of English would enable me to obtain all the key information on the issues outlined above.

Unlike previous surveys such as those conducted by Jenkinson (1940) and Calthrop (1971), mine was not to be concerned with the TITLES of the novels in use but rather with their actual USE - from the reasons for choosing to use them in the first place to the methods employed for the reading of them.

I arranged for my questionnaire to be sent out to every school in the Lanark Division of Strathclyde and 374 questionnaires were distributed to schools in Lanark Division in June 1985. (A more

detailed discussion of the sample appears in 3.4 below.)

3.3 Development of the Questionnaire

There were three stages in the development of the questionnaire. For reasons of clarification I have classified them as follows :

a) the Draft Questionnaire (January 1985)
b) the Pilot Questionnaire (March 1985)
c) the Final Questionnaire (June 1985)

(To make this discussion more convenient, loose copies of each of these documents - which will be referred to from now on, as DQ, PQ, and FQ respectively - have been supplied with this thesis. They appear in Appendices II, III and IV respectively).

DQ was the first stage where the intention was to explore how information could be gathered. Once that had been done, it was revised and another questionnaire was drawn up incorporating the lessons from DQ. This second or pilot version, PQ, was intended to be a 'dry run' for the real survey which would hopefully iron out any remaining problems. The final version, FQ, was therefore to be issued before the end of the 1984-85 school year. At the time I was under some pressure since it was clear in early 1985 that there were likely to be some

'work to rule' problems in teaching that may have affected the response rate to any questionnaire sent out to schools. I felt it important to get the questionnaire published and into schools before the end of that particular session to hopefully avoid the worst of the problem.

3.3.1 Draft Questionnaire (DQ)

As a first step DQ was drawn up and issued to the 14 members of my own department (also a school in the Lanark Division of Strathclyde) in January 1985. It was a very brief questionnaire with only eight questions, but it did reveal that there was a great deal of interesting information to be gleaned on the subject of the class novel. (A copy of DQ also appears in Appendix II). Some difficulties however, became immediately apparent: answers to Question 3 for example, though highly informative, were to prove very difficult to analyse in terms of which method of reading was the most important. This applied similarly to answers to Question 2 on the purposes of the class novel. A wholesale revision of the questionnaire was called for. This was undertaken immediately with the ultimate aim of issuing FQ in June. Apart from the industrial situation mentioned above, there was another reason for issuing the questionnaire in June. I felt that the end of a session was the best time of year for a questionnaire of this kind to be issued because the questions could be framed in such a way as to ask teachers to reflect on their immediate experience over the closing session. And if the end of the session was the best time, then

June was clearly the best month to choose since, in Scotland, the public examinations of 'O'Grade, 'H'Grade and CSYS are all complete by then, thus freeing teachers of the considerable pressure of preparing classes for examinations.

DQ was therefore revised and a new and more detailed questionnaire was drawn up for piloting in March 1985.

3.3.2 The Pilot Questionnaire (PQ)

The piloting was done in three S1 - S6 Comprehensive schools in Glasgow, where, as with all Strathclyde secondary schools, all the classes at S1 and S2 stage are mixed ability classes. The three Principal Teachers of English concerned agreed to issue PQ (a copy of which appears in Appendix III) to each teacher in their department and to ask them to complete it.

As a result of this piloting I received some 16 completed questionnaires, of which 14 were found to have current S1 and /or S2 mixed ability classes. It was with these questionnaires that an analysis of the results was undertaken. As a consequence of this analysis, a total of nine changes were made to PQ before it was issued to all schools in Lanark as the Final Questionnaire.

3.3.3 The Final Questionnaire (FQ)

The nine changes made to PQ will be treated one by one in the remainder of this chapter. (A copy of the Final Questionnaire itself appears in Appendix IV).

Change 1

The page of 'Background Information' at the start of PQ was incorporated into the main body of FQ. There was also a degree of rationalisation to focus on S1 and S2 classes only in Question 1 a) to f) of FQ. In addition Question i) in PQ's 'Background Information' section was developed in Question 2 of FQ to include not only an estimate of the number of absentees per period, but also an estimate of the numbers of pupils with reading difficulties per class. The same 'grid' format of PQ was used in FQ for both.

Change 2

Question 3 of PQ produced some valuable information but in a form that was to prove very difficult to analyse statistically. The question in PQ offered teachers five possible options for reading a class novel and asked them to 'tick' the ones they used. This produced the following interesting results :

TABLE 1 METHODS OF READING (PQ)

individually by each child in class	7
individually by each child at home	6
aloud to the class as a whole by you	14
aloud to the class as a whole by a pupil(s)	7
aloud to groups formed in the class	6

The difficulty here was in the interpretation of the result. Though the number of teachers who used c) as a method of reading the novel was striking (all 14 who had mixed ability S1 or S2), it was not possible to see from this how important this method was in terms of the proportion of the novel read in this way. Though all 14 teachers ticked it as one of the methods they used to read the novel, it was possible, for example, that some used it for the reading of the first chapter but thereafter relied on the pupils reading individually at home - method b). This problem was ironed out in FQ by the introduction of an additional instruction (with an additional column of boxes) to rank the methods used in order of importance with '1' being the method "by which most pages of the novel were read" and so on down to '7', where appropriate, as the method by which fewest pages of the novel were read.

Thus in FQ this was as follows :

TABLE 2 METHODS OF READING (FQ)

individually by each child in class

individually by each child at home

aloud to the class as a whole by you

aloud to the class as a whole by a volunteer pupil

aloud to the class as a whole by a selected pupil

aloud to the class as a whole by each pupil in turn

aloud to groups formed in the class

As is clear from the above, FQ enables the relative importance of various methods of reading to be studied clearly. This change was incorporated into any question where more than one option could be ticked.

Two other points about this question had an affect on FQ. Firstly the option d) which in PQ reads "aloud to the class as a whole by a pupil(s)". A surprisingly high number of teachers indicated that they used this as one of the methods by which the novel was read. I say surprisingly, in the light of claims made for example, by Holbrook (1967) about the demise of 'reading round the class' (p183). It therefore seemed to me to be worth investigating further the use of 'pupil' reading in class. If seven of the 14 teachers in PQ who had mixed ability classes in S1 and/or S2 used a pupil or pupils reading as one of the methods of reading the class novel, then there seemed to be grounds for further inquiry especially since in classes where the reading abilities of the pupils were likely to range from the very able to the barely competent (or indeed the non-reader), the use of

such a method might pose special difficulties. Thus, in FQ account was taken of three possible methods of 'pupil' reading aloud of the novel in class. It could be read by "a volunteer pupil"; by "a selected pupil"; or by "each pupil in turn". Clearly the last of these three possibilities is the one which comes closest to what has been traditionally known as 'reading round the class'. The precise definition of the methods of reading in class is essential if we are to be able to say anything about this subject with any certainty. The literature up until now has generally distinguished only two types of reading that go on in English classrooms : "private reading" and "class reading" (to quote the terms used by Bullock (1975)).

Secondly, this question in PQ seemed to point to the overriding importance of reading aloud (in whatever form) as a method of reading the class novel. All 14 of the teachers concerned used it as at least one of their methods of reading the class novel. What was lacking from PQ then, was a question asking about the reasons for this. In FQ therefore a full question on the reasons for choosing to read the novel aloud was introduced - Question 11. This was deliberately placed in FQ to follow on from Question 10 which asked for reasons for using the class novel with S1 and/or S2 mixed ability classes, and offered four possible reasons for choosing to spend class time reading aloud as well as a fourth 'other' option.

Change 3

Following on from the question about how the novel was read, there was a question in PQ about one of the problems associated with the reading aloud of a class novel. In FQ this order of questioning was retained but Question 4 was made clearer and more precise. In PQ it was clear that an oral summary by the teacher was the most popular means of coping with the problem of absentees during the course of the reading of the novel, but the same number of teachers who ticked this method of coping with absentees (eight), also indicated in e) another solution. The most significant of these 'other' solutions was having the pupil(s) catch up on the parts they had missed by reading on their own. This option was therefore included in Question 4 of FQ to replace option c) of PQ.

Change 4

Question 5 of PQ was retained in FQ with some minor changes to aid clarity but because seven teachers ticked more than one of the boxes offered in PQ, when this question was printed in FQ, the word "OR" was added in between each of the options to indicate more clearly that each method ought to be considered as excluding any other method in relation to the reading of any one class novel.

Change 5

Question 6 of PQ was retained with the only change being the insertion of the phrase "one particular" in the FQ version.

Change 6

Question 7 of PQ was 'tightened up' considerably in FQ. In particular it included a 'built in' check on the numbers of pupils in each class who had reading difficulties as defined in Question 2 a) of FQ. Sections e) and f) of Question 7 (PQ) were dropped and section g) became, in Question 9 of FQ, another check on earlier responses, this time in relation to FQ Question 6 - the number of hours in class spent on all aspects of the class novel.

Change 7

Question 8 of PQ became Question 10 in FQ but option b) was dropped as being too general offering little scope for comment. However an important change was made in FQ to enable a distinction to be made between the "availablity" of class sets of novels and their "convenience" in terms of organising work for the class as a whole, as reasons for choosing to use a class novel. As with earlier questions where it was possible for teachers to indicate more than one option, a ranking column was provided in FQ to allow for a more detailed analysis of responses.

Change 8

Question 9 of PQ became Question 13 of FQ. This was a crucial question because it asked teachers about the relative importance of class novels as opposed to other forms of classroom activity in their S1 and S2 courses. The difficulty thrown up by PQ, was that the word "importance" was too vague and seemed to puzzle some teachers who answered this question. The term "importance" therefore, as has been mentioned earlier, was defined on the questionnaire whenever it was used - in this case to refer to "time spent in class". Another key change made to this question before its inclusion in FQ was the addition of a second row of boxes to allow teachers to answer separately for S1 and S2. Finally this question was moved to the end of the questionnaire where teachers, having considered in some detail, various aspects of their use or lack of use of the class novel, might reflect upon its overall importance as a component of their English courses in S1 and S2.

Change 9

Finally, Question 10 of PQ was revamped entirely and moved to an earlier position as Question 8 of FQ. Since this question deals with assignments set on the class novel,it was placed to follow Question 7 of FQ which dealt with the general issue of assignments set. Thus in Question 8 of FQ four possible types of assignments were included as options with a fifth 'other' option being provided. Once again, teachers were asked to rank their responses in order of "importance",

this time in terms of the types of assignment "on which the pupils spent most time". And unlike Question 10 of PQ, this question in FQ focused on S1 and S2 classes only.

3.3.4 Preparation for Analysis

The Final Questionnaire was therefore ready to be sent out to schools. Together with essential background information on individual teachers' timetables provided for in Questions 1 and 2, all the necessary data for a detailed examination of this topic could be obtained by FQ. Although the questionnaires were to be completed anonymously, each was given a four digit code to enable me to look at specific schools if that were to prove worthwhile.

To cope with what was clearly going to be a substantial amount of data, I arranged for the responses to be analysed by computer. The programs used were from the S.P.S.S. suite which allowed responses to be crosstabulated as well as providing Absolute Frequencies for each question. This was done for me by Ms Susan Anderson, then of Paisley College of Technology, who eventually supplied me with several hundred pages of data.

Before going on to report the results however, it is necessary to say something about the sample.

3.4 The Sample

Discussing the sample entails looking at the number of English teachers in Scotland who would have had mixed ability S1 and / or S2 classes in June 1985. This is very difficult indeed to estimate because, although there are figures from the Scottish Education Department census of September 1984 (relating to the school year 1984/85) for the number of English teachers who had S1 and S2 classes, the varying regional, divisional and indeed school policies on class composition in these two years of secondary school, make it very difficult to be certain of the exact number of teachers who, while indicating that they had S1 and / or S2 classes on the census form, had S1 or S2 classes which were in fact mixed ability classes.

In the aforementioned S.E.D. census 4,206 teachers of English were teaching S1 classes and 3,997 were teaching S2 classes. Using these figures it is possible to say a little more about the sample. In my survey 101 teachers had some form of S1 mixed ability class - 2.4% of teachers of English teaching S1 classes in Scotland at the time. 86 teachers in my survey had some form of S2 mixed ability class - 2.1% of English teachers teaching S2 classes in Scotland at the time. However, since by no means every S1 and S2 class in Scotland at the time of the survey was a mixed ability class, it is fair to say that these percentage figures are conservative estimates of the sample. It is however, not a random sample as it is geographically based. The question therefore arises as to how typical or not Lanark is of Strathclyde Region, of Scotland of, indeed, the United Kingdom. This

is a difficult question to answer involving as it does a great many factors. The Scottish Education Department have statistics on the numbers of pupils and teachers in each region of the country. All this shows however is that Lanark is one of the larger educational divisions in the country in terms of numbers of pupils and teachers. Taken together with the fact that Lanark Division includes very 'rural' schools in places like Biggar, Lesmahagow and the town of Lanark itself, as well as schools in heavily industrialised towns like Motherwell and Coatbridge, the relatively large number of schools in the division might be seen as representing a fairly wide cross-section of the Scottish educational system. It certainly contains no features which suggest that it is strikingly a-typical.

In my survey, every secondary school in the Lanark division of Strathclyde was sent enough questionnaires for every English teacher to be issued with one. (This excluded my own school, which, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, was used in developing the questionnaire). In addition, three secondary schools in Manchester were also sent copies of the questionnaires (all three were comprehensives). Since it has been Regional policy in Strathclyde since 1981 to have all S1 and S2 classes made up on a mixed ability basis (i.e. including 'remedial' pupils), and since when S1 and S2 classes go to English they do so as complete classes (i.e. they are not 'blocked' together to produce various 'sets'), I could be as certain as it was possible to be, of getting my questionnaire to teachers who, if they had S1 or S2 classes, had mixed ability classes, at least where the teachers in Lanark were concerned. It was my

intention to concentrate on the Lanark data and to use the much smaller Manchester data as the basis for a limited comparison (see Appendix V). The figures for Lanark were as follows :

TABLE 3 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE - I

Number questionnaires issued	374
Number questionnaires returned	144
Number indicating S1/S2 classes	114
Number indicating no S1/S2 classes	7
Number returned blank	23

The response rate was therefore 39% if we include every questionnaire returned or 30% if we include only those who indicated that they had S1/S2 classes. And from the above figures it is possible to say that at least 30% of English teachers in Lanark had either S1 or S2 mixed ability classes on their timetables in June 1985. However it is extremely likely that the total number of teachers of English in Lanark who had either S1 or S2 mixed ability classes was somewhat lower than the total number of teachers of English and that therefore the figure 114 referred to above would in all probability be a higher percentage (i.e. higher than 30%) of those who had such classes.

The response rate may have been affected by a number of factors. In the first place, the questionnaires were sent out to heads of department by the Adviser in English for the division, with an

accompanying letter asking that they be distributed to each member of their department. This was done partly to avoid the considerable expense of posting them individually to every English teacher in the division and partly because, by arranging to have them sent out to heads of department with an accompanying letter from the Adviser in English for Lanark, the survey would 'carry more weight' with teachers thus encouraging a serious professional response. There was however no guarantee that every teacher of English in the division received one - in one case, for example, the entire bundle was returned with an accompanying letter from the head of department saying he did not consider it his place to distribute them. Secondly, by June 1985 the beginnings of the teachers' dispute were already being felt in Scotland and some teachers may have felt unwilling to participate in what might have been seen, by some, as an unnecessary and irksome addition to their workload.

One might also speculate as to why the teachers who did reply, chose to do so. Given that the questionnaire was entirely voluntary, it could be argued that those teachers who completed it might have been those who had a particular interest in the class novel or who, since the questionnaires were distributed on a departmental basis, belonged to departments which were biased in favour of the use of class novels. It is difficult to rule either of these possiblities out entirely. However what can be said is firstly, that the number of respondents was substantial, given the nature of the survey, and came in fact from a wide range of schools across the division. In the completed questionnaires in particular, mentioned above, 20 of the 36 schools to

which the questionnaires were sent, were represented. And if we look at the total number of English teachers in these 20 schools and compare this with the number who returned completed questionnaires the picture is revealing :

TABLE 4 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE - II

Number of schools to return completed questionnaires	20
Total number of teachers of English in these schools	193
Number of teachers of English in these schools who returned completed questionnaires	114
% of teachers of English in these 20 schools who returned completed questionnaires	59%

Once again, it should be borne in mind that it is very unlikely that every one of the 193 English teachers in these 20 schools would have had first or second year classes. The '59%' figure would thus almost certainly be higher, if the percentage were taken only of those teachers in the said schools who did in fact have S1 or S2 classes.

Given this information, it seems unlikely that the results would be unduly influenced by the possible 'distortions' mentioned above. The number of schools represented in the sample would seem to indicate that it was not simply schools with a 'particular bias' in favour of using class novels which responded to the questionnaire. Similarly, the number of individual teachers who responded would seem to suggest that it was not simply those who had a 'particular interest' in class novels who did so.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the 'Absolute Frequencies' i.e. the raw totals of responses to each question on the questionnaire which are reported question by question. The second section reports the findings (including, where appropriate, crosstabulations), in terms of the 'Key Issues' identified in the previous chapter.

4.1 Absolute Frequencies

In this section each question on the questionnaire is treated separately and in turn and the raw totals of responses for each question and part of a question are reported i.e. the totals of, for example, teachers using each particular method mentioned in each question are given separately and separate totals of those ranking each option as '1', '2', '3' etc. are also provided.

Data from all schools in the survey, Lanark and Manchester, were used in this exercise. Later, as we shall see in due course, the Manchester data were extracted for the purpose of doing a very limited comparison.

4.1.1 Question 1

Parts a), b) and c) of this question dealt with the number of teachers who had S1 (First Year) and / or S2 (Second Year) classes during the session in which the survey took place and the number who used a class novel with either (or both) classes that session. There is a slight discrepancy in the totals here - in Question 1 b), teachers were asked not to complete the questionnaire if their answer to Question 1 a) was 'No'. However, although only 122 teachers said 'Yes' to Question 1 a), there were in fact 124 completed questionnaires. To avoid any possible complications of interpretation later therefore, the figure 122 is the one which will be used as the more reliable indicator of those teachers with S1 and/or S2 classes.

The findings were as follows :

TABLE 5 S1/S2 TEACHERS USING CLASS NOVELS

No. of teachers with S1 and / or S2 class	122
No. of teachers who used a class novel with either/both classes	115

The main aim of part d) of this question was to identify which teachers in the sample were currently teaching a first or second year mixed ability class and who also claimed to have used a class novel with either or both of these classes. However it did produce some interesting results concerning those teachers of S1 and S2 "set or streamed" classes as will be noted. In the following table the numbers refer to numbers of teachers teaching the various types of classes :

TABLE 6 CLASS NOVEL USE WITH TYPES OF CLASS

S1 set or streamed	3
S1 mixed ability	83
S1 mixed ability but with remedial extraction	18
S2 set or streamed	11
S2 mixed ability	69
S2 mixed ability but with remedial extraction	17

One interesting thing about these figures is that all the teachers, whether they taught a set, streamed or some form of mixed ability class said they had used a class novel in the year of the survey.

It is however those teachers of some form of mixed ability class who used class novels that presently concerns us. From the information above it is clear that the total numbers of teachers with some form of mixed ability class in the survey were as follows :

TABLE 7 TEACHERS OF MIXED ABILITY CLASS(ES)

S1 : 101 (83 + 18)

S2 : 86 (69 + 17)

In all, as we can see from responses to 1 a), 122 teachers had some form of First and / or Second Year class. However, it should be borne in mind that some teachers had both S1 and S2 classes and that in these cases one class might be set or streamed, the other mixed ability or both might be mixed ability.

4.1.2 Question 2

This question was in two parts. It was designed to elicit some important information that might affect the day to day organisation of work with a class novel - information on numbers of pupils in each class with reading difficulties and on numbers of absentees. This information was necessary if a precise examination of the nature of classroom reading in English classrooms was to proceed. This question was therefore on the make-up of the class and did not include any mention of reading methods or types of assignment. (This point, together with some interesting discrepancies in teachers' responses is explained more fully in 4.2.7 below).

TABLE 8 CLASS COMPOSITION

Part a)

Pupils per class with reading difficulties

	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	10+
S1	33	57	16	3
S2	28	49	8	1

Part b)

Pupils per class normally absent

	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10
S1	65	33	0
S2	44	39	2

In Part a) is shown the number of teachers indicating how many pupil in each of their mixed ability S1 and / or S2 classes had readin difficulties as defined in the question (i.e. pupils who "would hav difficulty in reading unaided" a novel selected by the teacher for th class as a whole). It can thus be seen that 76 (57 + 16 + 3) teacher of the 101 who had S1 mixed ability classes, reported having three o more such pupils in each class. And 58 (49 + 8 + 1) teachers of the 8 who had S2 mixed ability classes reported having three or more suc pupils in each class.

In Part b) is shown the numbers of teachers indicating how man pupils in their S1 and / or S2 classes were normally absent pe period. It can thus be seen that 33 teachers of S1 reported normall having three or more absentees per period in each class and 41 (39 2) teachers of S2 reported normally having three or more absentees pe period in each class.

It is worth noting here that the contractually agreed maximum clas size in both S1 and S2 in Scotland is 30 pupils.

This information was vital if a clear investigation of the practica problems that might arise in using a class novel with a mixed abilit class was to proceed. How teachers cope with pupils who have readin difficulties and with absentees are very important practical question in the day to day management of the work in a modern Englis classroom. This is particularly true where the absentee rate is hig

where both of these occur in the same class. What constitutes a 'high' rate of both is of course open to question and is a point I shall return to in 4.3.2 below and again in the next chapter.

4.1.3 Question 3

Having looked at the kinds of S1 / S2 class being given a class novel, and having examined the absentee pattern and the proportion of the class likely to experience difficulties in reading the novel unaided, I was then interested in investigating the method or combination of methods that teachers used in reading the class novel. In the process of piloting the questionnaire (as indicated in the previous chapter), I had refined this question quite considerably. In the final questionnaire seven possible methods of reading appear (which would, incidently, equally apply to reading in class with a non-mixed ability class.) Teachers could of course employ these methods in a variety of ways e.g. a teacher might use one method for reading all of the novel or he might employ two or more methods in the reading of the novel. In asking about the methods used it was therefore essential to clearly distinguish between on the one hand, what methods were used and on the other, the relative importance of each method in terms of getting the novel read. To ensure that this information became clear teachers were asked to tick the method or methods they used and then, if more than one method was used, to rank them in order of importance "with '1' being the method by which most pages of the novel were read and so on down to '7' as the method by which fewest pages of the novel were read". Teachers who ticked one

method only were thus counted as having ranked that method as '1'. In the following table, the results are printed for methods ranked '1' and '2' according to the above procedure :

TABLE 9 METHODS OF READING

	Ranked '1'	Ranked '2'
individually by each child in class	11	15
individually by each child at home	16	9
aloud to the class as a whole by you	83	22
aloud to the class as a whole by a volunteer pupil	8	23
aloud to the class as whole by a selected pupil	6	32
aloud to the class as a whole by each pupil in turn	10	7
aloud to groups formed in the class	0	2

Discrepancies in Tables with Rankings

A problem evident here is the discrepancy in the totals. It will be noted that neither of the totals for 'Ranked 1' nor 'Ranked 2' comes to 124 (the number of completed questionnaires in the sample). This type of discrepancy occurs in those questions where teachers were asked to 'rank' as well as 'tick'. Thus Table 10 (4.1.4 below), Table 15 (4.1.8. below), Table 19 (4.1.10 below), Table 20 (4.1.11 below) and Table 23 (4.1.13 below) may have this kind of discrepancy. The explanation for this discrepancy can be made by using Table 9 above as an example.

In the case of the 'Ranked 1' column here, the total is 134 when it should not exceed 124. This is explained by two things. Firstly, some very few teachers disregarded the rubric and ranked more than one option '1='. Secondly a few more ticked more than one method but failed to rank them - where this happened all were treated as indicating that the methods ticked were of equal importance and were all '1='. In both these cases, provided the response was clear, all '1' rankings were included in the count. The alternatives to treating such responses in this way seemed to me to be less satisfactory than the way chosen. For example, such responses could simply have been disregarded altogether, but in each case that would have been to disregard worthwhile responses. Thus unless there was some other factor (such as ambiguously placed or faint ticks) all such responses were treated seriously in the way outlined. The number of questionnaires that this applied to was, as is evident from the figures, very small indeed. Here for example the discrepancy is 10. this means that a maximum of 10 teachers responded in either of the two ways mentioned above and this was the largest such discrepancy in any question on the questionnaire. The same discrepancy (10) occurs in Table 20 (see 4.1.11 below; in Table 15 (see 4.1.8 below) the discrepancy is eight; in Table 19 (see 4.1.10 below) it is three; in Table 10 (see 4.1.4 below) it is two, and no such discrepancy appears in the last table of this kind Table 23 (see 4.1.13 below). In each case the explanation for the discrepancy is the same as outlined here for Table 9.

In the case of the 'Ranked 2' column above, the total is 110. This is explained quite simply by the fact that some teachers used only one method in the reading of the novel.

From this table therefore, it is clear that out of a total of 122 teachers of S1 / S2, some form of reading aloud is used by 107 teachers (the sum of methods c) to g) in the 'Ranked 1' column), as the method by which most pages of the novel were read. And of these 83 read aloud themselves. Similarly, it is clear that some form of reading aloud is used by 86 teachers as the second most important method of reading the novel in terms of numbers of pages read (the sum of methods c) to g) in the 'Ranked 2' column).

Individualised reading of the class novel by contrast, is less prevalent as a method of reading the novel. A total of 27 teachers used some form of individualised reading as the method by which most pages of the novel were read and only 19 ranked some form of individualised reading as '2' .

The finding here that method a), "individually by each child in class", is used as the method by which most pages of the novel were read by only 11 teachers contrasts strikingly with the 107 who used some form of reading aloud as their main method of reading the novel. This point, and its relationship to the claim made in Bullock (1975) that there has been a "growth in individualised reading within a class" is taken up in the next chapter.

Question 4

This question dealt specifically with reading aloud and focused on the provision made for those pupils who were absent for the English period or periods when this was being done. Absenteeism is a peculiarly difficult problem for the teacher when something as long as a novel is being read aloud, especially if, as we shall see later, he or she intends to set assignments for the pupils based on the novel. Three possible methods were suggested in the question with the possibility of ticking a fourth 'other' box and explaining what that 'other' method was. In the event only seven teachers ranked this option as '1' and their explanations are classified below.

In addition teachers were offered a fifth option of ticking a box which meant that they had as yet "no solution" to this problem, and as is shown below, only two teachers in the sample did this (perhaps because teachers would not want to admit to weakness in their professional work):

TABLE 10 METHODS OF COPING WITH ABSENTEES		Ranked '1'	Ranked '2'
a)	I had short versions of the novel to enable them to read and catch up quickly	1	2
b)	I summarise the section they missed orally	87	12
c)	I relied on the pupil(s) to catch up by reading the missed sections silently	29	35
d)	None of these.	7	2
e)	If as yet you have no solution to this problem please tick this box	2	0

(Classification of ranked '1' responses to 4 d) : pupils read missed sections at home - 4; oral summary given by another pupil - 3).

As was the case in Question 3 above, the total number in the 'Ranked 1' column when the ticks in e) are included, seems to be at odds with the total number of teachers in the sample - 126 when there were only 124 teachers in the sample. The explanation provided in 4.1.3 applies here.

It is clear from these results that two methods of dealing with absentees were prominent:

method b) - an oral summary of the parts of the novel missed; and

method c) - the pupil being told to catch up by reading silently.

<This was true even where teachers ticked 4 d) i.e. where teachers indicated another method other than those listed>.

These methods raise two important questions : in the first place there is the question of how effective an oral summary can be particularly if, at the end of the reading of the novel, the pupils are to be expected to answer questions on the storyline which might

require re-reading (a point investigated in Questions 7 and 8 of the questionnaire). Secondly there is the position of the pupil with reading difficulties who might have been absent for some (or all) of the reading aloud in class but who might be required to catch up by reading the sections he missed silently. This particular difficulty is investigated in the next section of this chapter where those teachers who used some form of reading aloud as their main method of reading most pages of the novel were crosstabulated with those who ranked method c) here catching up by having the pupils read silently the sections they missed.

These two prominent methods of dealing with absentees during the reading of the novel were, as is clear from the table above, also the most prominent second ranked methods.

4.1.5 Question 5

Like the previous question, this one dealt with those teachers who used some form of reading aloud as the method by which most pages of the novel were read. The aim was to discover more precisely how the reading aloud in class was done. Teachers were offered three distinct and mutually exclusive possibilities with the further option of rejecting all three and describing their particular method. Here therefore teachers were not asked to rank methods but merely to indicate which method they used when reading aloud in class. However where teachers by mistake, did rank the methods, the method they ranked as '1' was taken to be the one used. Any other deviation from

the instruction in the question meant that the response was disregarded.

TABLE 11 METHODS OF READING ALOUD

a)	continuously (i.e. without interruption by, for example, writing assignments) during successive periods until it was finished	4
	OR	
b)	continuously during successive periods but with interruptions for writing assignments (eg. at the end of a chapter / section)	75
	OR	
c)	regularly (eg. one period per week) while carrying on with other work unrelated to the class novel	32
	OR	
d)	None of these. Please describe your method	4

Method b) above thus proved to be the clear favourite: 75 of the 115 teachers who used reading aloud as one of their methods of reading the novel said they read the novel continuously during successive English periods but with interuptions for writing assignments (e.g. at the end of a chapter / section). Of the 115 who used reading aloud as one of their methods of reading the novel, we already know that 107 used it as their main method reading (see 4.2.3 above). Thus the picture of how the class novel is used begins to emerge more clearly.

The fact that 32 teachers who used some form of reading aloud read the novel "regularly (e.g. one period per week) while carrying on with other work unrelated to the class novel" suggests a very different approach, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

A small number of teachers read the novel continuously without interruption during successive periods until it was finished and an equally small number (four) suggested other methods of reading the novel aloud. In each of these cases, only selected passages of the novel were read aloud, the rest of the novel being left to the pupil - but only one respondent explained precisely what form of pupil reading was used and in this case it was reading at home.

4.1.6 Question 6

Here teachers were asked to estimate the number of hours in class spent on all aspects of "one particular class novel". They were specifically asked to include in the estimate time spent reading in class. Estimates ranged from two hours at one extreme to 37 at the other. The average number of hours spent on one particular class novel was 15 (14.87) and 65 teachers of the 95 who completed this question, spent 12 or more hours on all aspects of one particular novel.

Given that only 95 of a possible 115 teachers who had either or both S1 and S2 mixed ability classes completed this question, one might conclude that it was a difficult task for respondents and the estimates that were given should therefore be viewed accordingly. However this point is clarified by responses to a later question as we shall see in 4.2.9 below.

4.1.7 Question 7

The aim of this question was to establish whether or not assignment were set on the class novel and if so if these assignments require the pupils to re-read parts of the novel.

TABLE 12 ASSIGNMENTS ON THE CLASS NOVEL	YES	NO
a) Did you set assignments based on the class novel?	122	1
b) If yes to a), did any of the assignments require the pupil to re-read parts of the novel?	121	1

There may appear to be an anomaly concerning the totals here. The total of those answering 'Yes' and 'No' comes to 123 in part a) and 122 in part b) when in each case the total should be 124. The explanation for this is simply that some teachers (one and two respectively for each part) failed to tick the relevant boxes.

There was therefore almost unanimous agreement amongst teachers on the setting of assignments on the class novel and on the fact that the assignments themselves would require pupils to re-read parts of the novel.

Part c) of this question was designed to focus teachers attention on the number of pupils in their mixed ability S1 and / or S2 classes who would have difficulty in attempting these assignments because they would have had problems with the reading. At the same time this provided an opportunity for contrasting the teachers' estimates here with their earlier estimates of the numbers of pupils in each class with reading difficulties (Question 2 a)). Such a contrast is

interesting - below the responses to 7 c) are tabulated in the same was as for 2 a) thus :

TABLE 13 PUPILS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES - I

Question 2 a)

	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	10+
In your First Year class(es)	23	57	16	13
In your Second Year class(es)	28	49	8	1

TABLE 14 PUPILS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES - II

Question 7 c)

	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	10+
In your First Year class(es)	33	41	18	0
In your Second Year class(es)	35	37	11	0

Thus when asked in Question 2 a) about numbers of pupils with reading difficulties in each class, 76 teachers of S1 classes said they had three or more such pupils and 58 teachers of S2 classes said they had three or more such pupils.

However, when asked in Question 7 c) to estimate the numbers of pupils in class who would have had problems doing assignments that

required re-reading parts of the novel, the number indicating three or more in their S1 class drops to 59. This difference (of 17 in fact) is worth considering. One possibility is that (as with Question 6 perhaps) numerical estimates are difficult for respondents to give. But this seems unlikely in this case where teachers are being asked very specifically about individual pupils in their classes with reading problems. Another possibility is that the wording of the questions accounts for the discrepancy. Again, it is difficult to see why this should have been so - in both cases the questions are very clear, unambiguous and precise. A third and perhaps more credible possibility is that when asked about the number of pupils with reading difficulties in the classes they have been teaching, as in 2 a), teachers are more likely to err on the side which represents the difficulties they face dealing with such classes. When asked however, as in 7 c), to estimate the numbers of pupils in their classes who have had difficulty doing assignments which they themselves set, they are likely to be more conservative in their estimates.

A similar discrepancy is to be found in the figures for S2 classes (58 teachers indicating in 2 a) that they had three or more pupils with reading difficulties as against 48 in 7 c) indicating that three or more pupils would have had problems doing assignments that required re-reading parts of the novel).

In any event it is clear that a substantial number of teachers had three or more pupils in each S1 or S2 class who would have found it very difficult to do assignments that required some re-reading of the novel.

The final part of this question, part d), asked if special attention was given to pupils with reading difficulties - 110 teachers ticked 'Yes' and four ticked 'No'. Classifying the specific types of special attention mentioned by teachers proved difficult but three main types did emerge :

TABLE 14a

Using a co-operative teacher	36
Giving extra individual help	34
Setting easier assignments	11

These were the only types of special attention to be mentioned by more than 10 teachers although thirteen other kinds were listed ranging from "Vocabulary coaching" to "Provision of model answers".

4.1.8 Question 8

Here teachers were asked about types of assignments set on the class novel and they were asked to rank in order of importance, in terms of the amount of time pupils spent on each, four types of assignment. A fifth option allowed teachers to specify other types of assignment not covered by those stated. In the following table, the first and second rankings are given for each assignment:

TABLE 15 TYPES OF ASSIGNMENT

	Ranked '1'	Ranked '2'
questions on the novel's storyline	52	40
questions on the novel's theme	11	22
questions on the author's purpose(s) and techniques	1	12
assignments using (parts of) the novel as a stimulus for personal / creative writing	67	29
other	1	9

Two types of assignment clearly emerge as being important in terms of the amount of time pupils spend on them : questions on the novel's storyline and assignments which use (parts of) the novel as "a stimulus for personal / creative writing". It is also worth noting that both these types of assignment also emerge as the most frequently set 'second' ranked assignments. The virtual absence of questions "on the author's purposes and techniques" from the '1' rankings is also notable - only one teacher in fact ranked such questions as '1'.

The total of 132 in the '1' column is explained (as earlier - see 4.1.3 above) by the fact that some teachers (in this case eight) ranked more than one type of assignment as being of equal importance.

4.1.9 Question 9

The two parts to this question dealt with a) the number of individual class novels used by teachers in one session with each class and b) with the percentage of English time in one session spent on class novels and related work. The average number of class novels used in one session by individual teachers was as follows :

TABLE 16 AVERAGE NUMBER OF CLASS NOVELS USED

With S1 mixed ability classes	3
With S2 mixed ability classes	3

(These averages were arrived at by taking the total number of teachers and dividing it into the total number of novels mentioned in this question.) In other words, on average, teachers of S1 mixed ability classes used three class novels in the course of a school year and teachers of S2 mixed ability classes also used three class novels in the course of one school year.

The full range was as follows :

TABLE 17 RANGE OF CLASS NOVEL USE

	With S1	With S2
Number of teachers using one class novel per class per session	8	2
Number of teachers using two class novels per class per session	31	33
Number of teachers using three class novels per class per session	35	27
Number of teachers using four class novels per class per session	18	18
Number of teachers using five class novels per class per session	6	6
Number of teachers using six class novels per class per session	2	0

Thus it can be said that the numbers of teachers using three or more class novels per class per session was :

TABLE 17a

With S1 mixed ability classes	61 (out of 101 teachers of S1)
With S2 mixed ability classes	51 (out of 86 teachers of S2)

In other words, 60% of those teachers who has S1 mixed ability classes used three or more class novels with each class per session. In the case of S2 the picture is virtually identical with 59% of those teachers who has S2 mixed ability classes using three or more class

novels per class per session.

The second part of this question was intended to be a check on teachers' earlier estimate of the number of hours in class that were spent on all aspects of one particular class novel (Question 6 - see 4.1.6 above). If we assume a maximum of four hours of English per week for each class and a school year of not more than 40 weeks, then the maximum time spent by any S1 or S2 class in English in any one session would be 160 hours. Responses to Question 6 as we have seen, lead us to expect that on average, teachers spend about 15 hours on each class novel that they use. Combine this with the average number of class novels used in one session with any one class given in this question (i.e. three), and we might expect to find that, on average, about 45 hours per session were spent on class novels. This would constitute around 28% of a school year in English of 160 hours. Thus we might expect here, that when asked what percentage of English periods in one complete session were devoted to class novels, the estimates to be of that order. What was found in fact was as follows :

TABLE 18 PERCENTAGE OF ENGLISH PERIODS DEVOTED TO CLASS NOVEL USE

% English periods	0-25	26-50	51-75	76-100
Teachers of S1	22	39	34	1
Teachers of S2	21	29	28	3

Thus 74 out of 101 teachers of S1 mixed ability classes said they spent 26% or more of their English periods on class novel work. 26% of the English time for the whole session (estimated above at not more than 160 hours) would be 42 hours. This compares with the estimated 45 hours we might have expected if a straight average were taken. It would thus appear that these estimates given by teachers are accurate enough for present purposes.

An interesting aspect of the responses to this question is that where S1 classes were concerned, 35 teachers (out of a possible 101) said they spent more than 50% of their English periods in one session on work related to class novels. In the case of S2 the picture is similar with 31 teachers (out of a possible 86) saying they spent more than 50% of their English periods in one session on work related to the class novel.

4.1.10 Question 10

Teachers were asked here to indicate why they chose to use a class novel with their S1 or S2 mixed ability class. Three possible reasons were offered with an 'other' option for those whose reasons did not conform to the ones listed. Teachers indicating more than one reason were asked to rank them in order of importance. The following table gives the numbers of teachers ranking each reason as '1' and '2'.

TABLE 19 REASONS FOR USING CLASS NOVEL

	Ranked '1'	Ranked '2'
class sets of novels are readily available in the departmental stock	13	19
it is easier to organise work for the class if all pupils have read the same novel	31	46
the shared experience of a class novel is important	58	25
other	23	10

Particularly noteworthy here is the number of teachers ranking 'other' as '1' thereby indicating that the listed reasons were unsatisfactory for them. These are classified as follows :

TABLE 19a

departmental policy	6
encourages reading	3
source of varied assignments	3
alternative to course books	2
influence of national exams	1
develops reading skill	1
form best suited to personal growth	1

A further four teachers ranked 'other' as '1' but failed to specify their reason.

Two reasons thus stand out : the shared experience of the class novel being important and the fact that it is easier for the teacher

to organise work for the class if all pupils have read the same novel. Reason c) 'the shared experience of a class novel is important' was given by 58 teachers as their main reason for using a class novel. This was from a total of 122 teachers (data from Lanark and Manchester was used, it will be remembered, in this section). In other words, 48% of teachers in this survey gave, as their main reason for using a class novel, the fact that the 'shared experience' of such a novel was important. In the same way, 26% of teachers in the sample (31 out of 121) gave as their main reason for using the class novel the fact that it is easier to organise work for the class if all pupils ahve read the same novel. This finding will be discussed further in the next chapter.

4.1.11 Question 11

Having asked about reasons for choosing to use the class novel, this question then went on to ask why teachers who had earlier indicated that they read aloud as one of their methods of getting through the novel with their classes (Question 3 - see 4.1.3 above), chose to do so. As we have already seen, 107 teachers indicated, in their responses to Question 3, that they used some form of reading aloud as the method by which most pages of the novel were read. Here teachers were offered three reasons for choosing to read aloud in class and were also given, the option of stating an 'other' reason if they so wished. Rankings '1' and '2' for each reason appear in the following table :

TABLE 20 REASONS FOR READING ALOUD

	Ranked '1'	Ranked '2'
reading aloud is a valuable experience in itself	45	30
it overcomes the problem of pupils with reading difficulties who could not read the novel silently by themselves	49	33
it ensures that every pupil goes through the novel at the same rate, thus making it easier to organise classwork	20	34
other	20	7

The picture here is less clear cut than in previous questions; but once again two reasons do stand out. Reading aloud was used by 45 teachers because they believed it to be a 'valuable experience in itself'. However, 49 teachers (or 40% of the total sample) gave as their main reason for reading aloud in class, the fact that it overcame 'the problem of pupils with reading difficulties' who could not read the novel silently by themselves. This is another interesting finding and one which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Reasons c) and d) attracted 20 '1' rankings. It was important where d) 'other' was concerned to attempt some sort of classification in order to see if there was any important reason missing from the listed ones. These reasons therefore are classified below :

TABLE 20a

aids comprehension	7
encourages interest / enjoyment	7
develops skills - discussion / listening	4
shared experience	1
source of effective reading	1

In common with other questions where some ranking was demanded there is a discrepancy in the total number of '1' rankings which here is 134. The explanation is the same as in previous cases of this kind, that where teachers ranked two or more reasons as '1=' all such rankings were counted towards the total for that reason (see 4.1.3 above).

4.1.12 Question 12

This was a general question which asked teachers to consider the problems of using a class novel with an S1 or S2 mixed ability class. Three possible problems were identified in the question and offered for consideration as well as a fourth option of giving another problem. Teachers were again asked to indicate which problems they agreed with and to rank them in order of importance to them with '1' being the main problem and so on down to '4' if necessary. As with previous tables of this type, the one below shows the numbers of teachers ranking each problem as '1' and '2':

TABLE 21 PROBLEMS OF USING CLASS NOVEL

	Ranked '1'	Ranked '2'
the absence of pupil choice may mean a lack of motivation	23	28
not every pupil is able to read the novel unaided	55	27
the more able pupils may be held back by the rest of the class	36	36
other	11	1

The problem identified by a clear majority of the teachers in this survey as being the main problem posed by choosing to use a class novel with a mixed ability S1 or S2 class, is therefore problem b) "not every pupil is able to read the novel unaided". The problem of the able child possibly being held back by the rest of the class during the use of a class novel was listed by 36 teachers as being the main problem, while 23 listed the absence of pupil choice and the consequent lack of motivation as being the main problem.

The spread of the '1' rankings was rather more even here than in some earlier questions. The 11 'other' problems specified in part d) proved relatively easy to classify in this instance, falling into three categories :

TABLE 22 'OTHER' PROBLEMS

(i)	the problem of classroom organisation / management	5
(ii)	the problem of teacher / pupil interest in the novel	4
(iii)	the prolem of ensuring that reading is done at home	2

The second of these 'other' reasons is of course very similar indeed to option a) on the actual questionnaire. However what makes it slightly different is the idea that the teacher's interest or motivation might be affected by using a novel in this way even if it was a novel of the teacher's own choice.

It is perhaps worth noting here that the numbers of teachers ranking each of the question's suggested problems as '2' was very similar indeed, suggesting perhaps that these three options do indeed cover the problems accurately (there is only one '2' ranking for any 'other' problem).

The discrepancy in the total number of '1' rankings here is only one and is to be accounted for by the reasons explained in relation to other such discrepancies.

4.1.13 Question 13

In this, the last question on the questionnaire, teachers were asked to assess the importance of the class novel as a component of their classroom teaching in S1 and S2 respectively, in terms of the amount of class time they spent on it. Six possible components were listed as options and a seventh option allowed teachers to specify an alternative component if they wished. Teachers were asked to rank the components in order of importance with '1' being the component upon which most class time was spent, and so on down to '7' as the component upon which least class time was spent. The table below once again shows numbers of teachers ranking individual components as '1' and '2' for S1 and S2 respectively :

TABLE 23 IMPORTANCE OF CLASS NOVEL

	S1 Ranked '1'	S1 Ranked '2'	S2 Ranked '1'	S2 Ranked '2'
the class novel	67	24	55	2
a play done with the whole class	2	17	1	1
a short story done with the whole class	0	12	1	1
a poem done with the whole class	1	7	0	
a course book done with the whole class	9	8	6	
non text-based units of work	15	22	12	1
other	3	3	2	

With teachers of S1 mixed ability classes therefore, the class novel is seen as the main component of the course by 67 of the 101 teachers who had such classes ; an additional 24 teachers ranked it as the second most important component of their S1 course.

With teachers of S2 mixed ability classes, the class novel was seen as the most important component of the course by 55 of the 86 teachers who had such classes ; an additional 20 teachers ranked it as the second most important component of their S2 course.

In terms of the numbers of teachers ranking individual components as '1', no other component comes close to the class novel in either S1 or S2. And in both S1 and S2 the class novel is also the most frequently ranked '2' option.

The second most frequently ranked '1' component for both S1 and S2 was "non text-based units of work". However with 15 and 12 teachers ranking this '1' rspectively for S1 and S2, it was a very long way behind the class novel in terms of the numbers of teachers who regarded it as the main component of the course.

Course books, much criticised in the literature as we have seen, came third in terms of numbers of teachers' '1' rankings in both S1

and S2 with only nine teachers of S1 classes ranking it as the most important component of their course, and only six teachers of S2.

Components b), c), and d) attracted very small numbers of teachers ranking each as '1' (two, zero and one respectively for S1 and one, one and zero respectively for S2). Only three teachers in the survey ranked an 'other' component as '1' in S1. Of these three, one merely ranked g) as '1' but failed to specify what the component was ; another ranked g) as '1=' with the class novel but also failed to specify what the component was ; and the third specified "individual projects".

Only two teachers in the survey ranked an 'other' component as '1' in S2. These were specified as being in one case, "S.R.A. kits" and in the other as "Thematic studies involving a variety of texts".

It is worth noting here that if the components of the courses are arranged in descending order with the most frequently ranked '1' component at the top, then the pattern is virtually identical for both S1 and S2 :

TABLE 23a

1. class novel
2. non-text-based units of work
3. course book
4. 'other'
5. class play

The only difference occurs with the "class poem" which in S1 comes sixth in terms of the numbers of teachers ranking it '1' with "a short story done with the whole class" attracting fewest '1' rankings amongst teachers of S1. In S2 the positions on these two components in the order are reversed with the "short story" coming sixth and the "class poem" attracting fewest '1' rankings amongst teachers of S2 (none in fact). There is therefore a very clear picture here of what teachers regard as the most important components of their classroom teaching in S1 and S2 (with mixed ability classes) in terms of the amount of "class time" devoted to each. It appears that at both the S1 and at the S2 stages, the class novel is seen by a substantial majority of the teachers who had such classes to be the most important component. 66% of teachers who had S1 mixed ability classes ranked the class novel as '1' in this question, and 64% of teachers who had S2 mixed ability classes ranked it as '1' here. The next most frequently ranked '1' component for each year group ("non-text-based units") by contrast comes a long way behind with only 15% of those teachers who had S1 mixed ability classes ranking it as '1' and only 14% of those teachers who had S2 ranking it as '1'.

4.2 KEY ISSUES

Having reported on the findings of the 'Absolute Frequency' count for each question, it might be helpful to look at the findings from the point of view of the three 'Key Issues' identified in Chapter 3 (see 3.1 above). They were :

1. the importance of the class novel
2. the methods of reading the class novel
3. the types of assignments set on the class novel.

As well as referring here to some of the results presented in the previous section, the results of some crosstabulations of data from Lanark will be examined for the light they throw on these issues.

(A limited comparison of Lanark with Manchester on these key issues using some of the data from this section appears in Appendix V).

4.2.1 The Importance of the Class Novel

A. Prevalence

The first thing to remind ourselves of here is the prevalence of the class novel. A number of questions on the questionnaire provide evidence on this point. We might begin with Question 1 where teachers of S1 and S2 mixed ability classes were asked to indicate if they had

used a class novel in the "current school year" with either or both of their S1 and S2 classes. If all types of mixed ability class are combined and taken separately for S1 and S2 the result is as noted earlier :

Teachers of S1 mixed ability 101
Teachers of S2 mixed ability 86
(See TABLE 7 in 4.1.1 above)

Given that the total number of teachers in the sample was 124, it can therefore be concluded that the use of the class novel with S1 and S2 mixed ability classes is widespread.

B. Importance

From 4.1.13 above, it is clear that a substantial majority of teachers of both S1 and S2 mixed ability classes regard the class novel as the most important component of their "current" classroom teaching, where importance is defined as the type of work upon which they spent "most class time". The numbers of teachers indicating this are worth stating again :

Teachers of S1 mixed ability 67
Teachers of S2 mixed ability 55
(See TABLE 23 in 4.1.13 above)

These figures are from a total number of teachers with S1 and S2 mixed ability classes respectively of 101 and 86.

Thus it is clear that the class novel is regarded as "the most important" component of their classroom teaching by 66% of those teachers currently teaching S1 mixed ability classes at the time of the survey, and by 64% of teachers currently teaching similar types of S2 classes. The relative importance of the class novel can be seen more clearly perhaps from the following table where the various 'components' appear in order of importance as defined above, with the component most frequently ranked '1' by teachers appearing first :

TABLE 24 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CLASS NOVEL

		S1		S2	
		Ranked '1'	'2'	Ranked '1'	'2'
1.	class novel	67	24	55	20
2.	non text-based units of work	15	22	12	18
3.	course book done with whole class	9	8	6	9
4.	other	3	3	2	2
5.	play done with whole class	2	17	1	13
6.	poem done with whole class	1	7	0	3
7.	short story done with whole class	0	12	1	10

It is clear then that in both S1 and S2, the class novel is seen by the teachers concerned, as the most important component of their classroom teaching, in that it is the component upon which most class

time is spent by a clear majority of teachers. In the case of S1, the class novel was ranked '1' by over four times as many teachers as ranked 'non text-based units of work' '1' which was the second most popular '1' ranking. The position with regard to the class novel in S2 is identical in this respect - over four times as many teachers ranking it '1' as ranked the second placed component '1' (also 'non text-based units of work').

If we look at the data from Question 9 in a little more detail, we can see that as well as the average number of class novels used in one session per class being three in both S1 and S2 (see 4.1.9 above), the following picture emerges:

TABLE 25 USE OF THREE OR MORE CLASS NOVELS

No. teachers of S1 using three or more class novels per session	61
No. teachers of S2 using three or more class novels per session	51

Thus 60% of teachers currently teaching S1 mixed ability classes at the time of the survey used three or more class novels in that session and 59% of teachers of the same type of S2 classes used three or more class novels in that session.

C. Reasons

The next question that arises is why this should be so and in the survey there are some clues. Question 10, it will be remembered, asked precisely this question and we have already seen the reasons teachers

gave. However, in order to reveal more clearly the relative importance of the reasons given and those, if any, which dominate, the reasons are listed here in descending order of importance (including those listed under 'Other') with the reason attracting the most '1' rankings first :

TABLE 26 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR USING CLASS NOVEL

1.	The shared experience of a class novel is important	58
2.	It is easier to organise work for the class if all pupils have read the same novel	31
3.	Class sets of novels are readily available in the departmental stock	13
4.	It is departmental policy	6
5.	It encourages reading	3
6.	It is a source of varying levels of difficulty in assignments	3
7.	Alternative to course books	2
8.	External exam influence	1
9.	Form best suited to personal growth	1
10	Reading skill is developed	1

The first reason above "the shared experience of a class novel is important" is by far the most frequently stated 'main' reason for using class novels, attracting nearly twice as many '1' rankings as its nearest rival.

It is interesting to note however, the relatively high number of 'Other' reasons specified here as '1' - numbers four to ten in the above list were specified by teachers themselves in the space marked

'Other' on the questionnaire - the largest number of such responses to this kind of option in any question on the questionnaire. Teachers were apparently more willing to specify their own reasons here than in other similar questions.

D. Problems

The last aspect of this point which is worth looking at is what teachers see as the main problems with using a class novel with a mixed ability class. Question 12, reported on earlier in this chapter, asked teachers about this. The ranked '1' responses for the three main options are listed here again, this time in order of importance with the problem attracting the largest number of '1' rankings first :

TABLE 27 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF PROBLEMS IN USING CLASS NOVEL

1.	not every pupils is able read the novel unaided	55
2.	the more able pupils may be held back by the rest of the class	36
3.	the absence of pupil choice may mean a lack of motivation	23

The spread of '1' ranking is more even here than in some other questions but the problem identified as being the main one by a clear majority of the teachers is the fact that not every pupil in the class can read the novel unaided. Concern over something as basic to the English classroom as reading then, is a problem for many teachers who use class novels. One possible, and perhaps obvious solution, would be

for the novel to be read aloud. To investigate this further, those teachers in Lanark who ranked some form of reading aloud as the main means of reading most pages of the novel in Question 3 <options c) to g)>, were crosstabulated with those who gave various rankings to the problems offered here . The following result was obtained :

TABLE 28 READING ALOUD AND PROBLEMS OF USING CLASS NOVEL

'1' ranked problems:	Some form reading aloud ranked '1'
lack of pupil motivation	17
not all pupils able to read novel unaided	43
more able held back by rest of class	27
other	9

(As with other tables of this kind, it should be remembered that discrepancies in the totals of '1' rankings are explained by the fact that where teachers ranked more than one option as '1=', all such rankings were included in the count.)

From the above two tables then, it is possible to say that 43 of the 55 teachers (or 78%) who gave as their main ('1' ranked) problem in using a class novel the fact that not every pupil could read the novel unaided, also used some form of reading aloud as the method by which most pages of the novel were read as compared with 12 of the 55 (or 22%) ranking this as their main problem who used some other method of reading as their means of reading most pages of the novel. This interesting finding will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2.2 The Methods of Reading the Class Novel

Given some of the findings mentioned above, some further investigation of the methods of reading the class novel seemed worthwhile.

A. Relative Importance of Various Methods

Knowing what methods of reading teachers use when they use a class novel is fundamental to a full understanding of what is going on in the classroom; but it is crucial to consider also the relative importance of the various methods of reading. This was revealed by responses to Question 3. Below the various methods of reading are set out in descending order of importance (in terms of numbers of pages of the novel read by each), with the method ranked by most teachers as '1' appearing first :

TABLE 29 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF METHODS OF READING

1.	aloud to the class as a whole by you	83
2.	individually by each child at home	16
3.	individually by each child in class	11
4.	aloud to the class as whole by each pupil in turn	10
5.	aloud to the class as a whole by a volunteer pupil	8
6.	aloud to the class as a whole by a selected pupil	6
7.	aloud to groups formed within the class	0

What is revealed here is that 107 (i.e. 83 + 10 + 8 + 6) teachers - a massive 86% of the sample - used some form of reading aloud as either

their method of reading most pages of the class novel or as their ranked '1=' method. Of these 83 teachers read aloud themselves as their main method. No other method of reading comes anywhere close to this in terms of numbers of teachers ranking '1'. The two types of individual reading specified, though they come second and third on the above list, are very far behind reading aloud by the teacher. This finding is discussed more fully in the following chapter.

B. Reading Aloud

Given the importance of reading aloud, as revealed above, it seemed worth investigating this particular method further; firstly by examining the reasons teachers give for this and then by looking at the special problems that adopting this method of reading the class novel brings.

(i) Reasons

In Question 11 teachers were asked to indicate why they opted to use class time reading aloud. They were asked to give their main reason the ranking '1' and so on. As was seen in 4.1.11 above the spread of '1' rankings for the various reasons available was fairly even. Two reasons however did seem to emerge as the favourites amongst teachers in this survey. Here therefore are the reasons listed in order with the the most frequently ranked '1' reason first. To complete the picture, the table includes the various reasons specified in option d) of Question 11 where a total of 20 teachers gave 'other' reasons for

spending class time reading aloud as their '1' ranking. As wa mentioned previously, these proved difficult to classify in some case but the fact that so many teachers (the same number as opted to ran reason c) as '1' in fact) ranked this as '1', meant that som classification was needed. Thus the result was :

TABLE 30 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR READING ALOUD

1.	it overcomes the problem of pupils with reading difficulties who could not read the novel silently by themselves	49
2.	reading aloud is a valuable experience in itself	45
3.	it ensures that every pupil goes through the the novel at the same rate, thus making it easier to organise classwork	20
4.	aids comprehension	7
5.	encourages interest	7
6.	forms basis for discussion and listening	2
7.	develops skills	2
8.	only source of effective reading and listening for some	1
9.	shared experience	1

The two reasons most frequently given as being the main ones for reading the class novel aloud in class are thus the fact that it is ir itself a "valuable experience" and, with slightly more teachers, the fact that it overcomes the problem of pupils with reading difficulties being unable to read the novel unaided. The total of 134 '1' rankings here indicates, as we have seen in 4.1.3 above, that a maximum of ten teachers ranked some reasons as being equally important. This,

together with the fact that the spread of '1' rankings is more even, might be taken to suggest a wider spread of opinion on this question.

This seems to be confirmed by the yet more evenly spread second rankings :

TABLE 31 SECOND RANKED REASONS FOR READING ALOUD

Question 11	option a)	30 teachers	ranked it '2'
	option b)	33 teachers	ranked it '2'
	option c)	34 teachers	ranked it '2'
	option d)	7 teachers	ranked it '2'

To investigate how many teachers who used some form of reading aloud as their main method of reading the novel, gave each of the reasons in Question 11 a '1' ranking, these two sets of responses were crosstabulated. This would enable a much more detailed look at the situation.

The following table demonstrates this :

TABLE 32 MAIN REASONS FOR USING READING ALOUD AS MAIN METHOD

1' Ranked reasons for reading aloud	Teachers who ranked some form reading aloud '1'
Valuable experience in itself	30
Overcomes problem of pupils with reading difficulties	42
Ensures every pupil goes through novel at same rate	18
Other reason	11

From this it can be said that 42 teachers who used some form of reading aloud as their method of reading most pages of the class novel, also gave as their main reason for doing so the fact that it overcame the problem of pupils with reading difficulties not being able to read the novel silently by themselves. However some 30 such teachers gave as their main reason the fact that reading aloud was a valuable experience in itself. And 18 such teachers said their main reason for reading the novel aloud was that it ensured that every pupil went through the novel at the same rate. Interestingly when a full crosstabulation of responses to this option with those who ranked some form of reading aloud as '1' was done the result was significant:

TABLE 33 READING ALOUD AND ENSURING SAME RATE OF READING

Ensures every pupil goes through novel at same rate	Some form of reading aloud		ROW TOTAL
	Not used	Ranked '1'	
Not given	14	18	32
Ranked '1'	1	18	19
Ranked '2'	3	29	32
Ranked '3'	4	18	22
Ranked '4'	0	8	8
COLUMN TOTAL	22	91	113

Chi Square: 18.515 with 4 Degrees of Freedom. Significance: 0.001

Missing observations : 2

(The 'Not used' column here refers to teachers who did not rank any reading aloud method as '1' i.e. who ranked one or other of the two 'individual' methods as '1' in Q.3.)

Thus there is a significant relationship between the numbers of teachers who use reading aloud as their main means of reading the class novel and the numbers who give as their main reason for doing so the fact that it ensures that all pupils go through the novel at the same rate. Thus those teachers who give this as their main reason tend to be those who read aloud most pages of the novel and vice versa. This finding will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

(ii) Problems

The reading aloud of most pages of a novel, brings with it some particular problems that are worth considering in some detail for the light they throw on the practice of English teaching. Two problems in particular come to mind : the problem of how to cope with absentees if, as seems inevitable, the reading continues over a number of English periods on different days; and the problem of pupils with reading difficulties who might have trouble keeping the storyline in their heads if the reading of the novel is done over a protracted period of time.

a) The Problem of Absentees

The first step here is to look again at responses to Question 2 where teachers were asked to indicate the numbers of pupils normally absent from each S1 or S2 class per period. The question of what number of absentees per period constitutes a problem for the teacher reading aloud the class novel is of course a debatable one which will be taken up in the next chapter. For the moment attention will be focussed on the figure three or more. Thus taking the information from Question 2 (see 4.2.2 above) the following table may be compiled :

TABLE 34 ABSENTEES

Teachers of S1 reporting 3+ pupils normally absent	33
Teachers of S2 reporting 3+ pupils normally absent	41

Taken as a percentage of all those with S1 and S2 classes respectively, it can be said that 33% of teachers of S1 reported having three or more pupils absent per class per period and 48% of teachers of S2 reported likewise.

The problem of absentees might be compounded by two additional factors. In the first place the three or more pupils normally absent per period might be different pupils every period. Secondly, they might include pupils with reading difficulties unable to catch up by reading the sections they missed silently on their own. (This point will be taken up shortly).

The problem of absentees was investigated further by crosstabulating ranked '1' responses to Question 3 c) to g) i.e. some form of reading aloud being ranked '1', with responses to a number of other questions. To begin with it was necessary to find out how many teachers who ranked some form of reading aloud as '1' in Q.3 reported having three or more pupils absent per period in S1 and S2. These responses were crosstabulated with responses to Q.2 b) and the results obtained were as follows:

TABLE 35 ABSENTEES AND READING ALOUD : S1

Absentees per period S1:	Some form of reading aloud		ROW TOTAL
	Not used	Ranked'1'	
0 - 2 pupils	14	49	63
3 - 5 pupils	1	27	28
Not applicable	7	15	22
COLUMN TOTAL	22	91	113

Chi Square: 6.957 with 2 Degrees of Freedom Significance : 0.03

Missing observations : 2

(The 'Not applicable' row refers to teachers who either did not have S1 mixed ability classes or who did not rank some form of reading aloud as '1' - or both)

Thus 27 teachers who used some form of reading aloud as their main method of reading the class novel reported normally having three or more pupils absent per period. The fact that this finding is significant at the 0.03 level seems to indicate a relationship between the numbers of teachers reporting absentees and the numbers who choose to read aloud.

In the case of S2 the picture is not totally dissimilar, though the figures are not 'significant:

TABLE 36 ABSENTEES AND READING ALOUD : S2

Absentees per period S2:	Some form of reading aloud		ROW TOTAL
	Not used	Ranked'1'	
0 - 2 pupils	10	33	43
3 - 5 pupils	4	30	34
5 - 10 pupils	0	1	1
Not applicable	8	28	36
COLUMN TOTAL	22	92	114

Chi Square : 2.108 with 3 Degrees of Freedom. Significance : 0.55

Missing observations : 1

Here 31 teachers who used some form of reading aloud as their main method of reading the class novel, also reported normally having three or more pupils absent per period per class.

Coping with absentees then might be said to have been a problem for a substantial number of teachers who read aloud most pages of the class novel. The next question to ask was how did such teachers cope with this problem.

To investigate this, responses indicating that some form of reading was the '1' ranked method of reading the novel were crosstabulated with the ranked '1' responses to Q.4 which dealt with possible

methods of coping with absentees. Thus :

TABLE 37 METHODS OF COPING WITH ABSENTEES AND READING ALOUD

'1' Ranked means of coping with absentees	Some form of reading aloud Ranked '1'
Short versions	1
Oral summary	71
Pupils read silently	18
Another method	4

From this table it can be seen that 71 of the 99 teachers (72%) from Lanark whose method of reading most pages of the novel was to read aloud, also said that their main method of coping with absentees was to summarise the section they missed orally. (It should be remembered that only data from Lanark were used in the crosstabulations).

When this method of coping was crosstabulated on its own with those using reading aloud, the result was :

TABLE 38 ORAL SUMMARY METHOD AND READING ALOUD

Oral summary	Some form of reading aloud		ROW TOTAL
	Not used	Ranked '1'	
Not used	9	14	23
Ranked '1'	7	71	78
Ranked '2'	5	7	12
Not applicable	0	1	1
COLUMN TOTAL	21	93	114

Chi Square : 15.736 with 3 Degrees of Freedom. Significance : 0.001

Missing observations : 1

Here the proportions of those ranking reading aloud '1' were dissimilar (significantly in fact) from the proportions not using reading aloud as a method of reading the novel, as regards their use of the oral summary. Thus teachers who rate reading aloud as '1' tend to be those who use oral summaries as a means of coping with absentees and vice versa.

This in itself raises the question of whether an oral summary of a section of a novel which the pupil missed being read aloud through absence, would be sufficient for the pupil if he / she happened to be a pupil with reading difficulties and especially if he / she was going to be required to complete assignments on the novel that might require re-reading.

b) The Problem of Pupils with Reading Difficulties

As with the problem of absentees, the place to start is with Question 2 where teachers were asked to indicate how many pupils in each of their S1 and S2 mixed ability classes would be unable to read a novel chosen by them for the class as a whole (the definition of a pupil with reading difficulties that appeared in this question). Again, as with the 'absentee' problem above, the question of what number of pupils with reading difficulties per class constitutes a problem for the teacher arises. Some teachers might argue that even one such pupil in their S1 or S2 class would constitute a problem. For the moment the figure three or more will be focussed upon :

Teachers with 3+ pupils with reading difficulties per class -

TABLE 39 THREE OR MORE PUPILS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES

in their S1 classes	76
in their S2 classes	58

Taken as a percentage of all those with S1 and S2 classes respectively, it can be said that 76% of teachers of S1 classes had three or more pupils with reading difficulties in each class and 67% of teachers of S2 classes had three or more such pupils in each class.

By crosstabulating responses to Question 2 with responses which ranked some form of reading aloud as '1' the picture becomes clearer :

TABLE 40 PUPILS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES AND READING ALOUD : S1

Reading difficulties: No. pupils per class - S1	Some form of reading aloud		ROW TOTAL
	Not used	Ranked '1'	
0 - 2 pupils	3	18	21
3 - 5 pupils	9	44	53
6 - 10 pupils	3	12	15
10+ pupils	0	3	3
Not applicable	7	15	22
COLUMN TOTAL	22	92	114

Chi Square : 3.457 with 4 Degrees of Freedom. Significance : 0.48

Missing observations : 1

Although there is no significant relationship revealed here, it can be seen from this table that 59 (i.e. 44 + 12 + 3) teachers of S1 who had three or more pupils with reading difficulties per class, also ranked some form of reading aloud as '1' in Question 3. This compares with 12 (i.e. 9 + 3) teachers of S1 who had three or more such pupils per class whose method of reading most pages of the novel was something other than a form of reading aloud.

A similar table for teachers of S2 is as follows :

TABLE 41 PUPILS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES AND READING ALOUD : S2

Reading difficulties: No. pupils per class - S2	Some form of reading aloud		ROW TOTAL
	Not used	Ranked '1'	
0 - 2 pupils	9	16	25
3 - 5 pupils	4	41	45
6 - 10 pupils	1	7	8
10+ pupils	0	1	1
Not applicable	8	28	36
COLUMN TOTAL	22	93	115

Chi Square : 8.335 with 4 Degrees of Freedom. Significance : 0.08

Once again the finding is not significant but 49 (i.e. 41 + 7 + 1) teachers of S2 who had three or more pupils with reading difficulties per class also ranked some form of reading aloud as '1' in Question 3, as compared with 5 (i.e. 4 + 1) teachers who had three or more such pupils per class but who used some other form of reading as their method of reading most pages of the novel.

One last point was examined here. I was interested in finding out if having pupils with learning difficulties extracted from the mixed ability class made any difference to the method of reading the novel chosen by the teacher. Accordingly, the relatively small number of teachers in Lanark who had mixed ability S1 classes from which 'remedial' pupils were extracted, were crosstabulated with those who ranked some form of reading aloud as '1'. The following result was obtained :

TABLE 42 MIXED ABILITY (REMEDIAL EXTRACTION) AND METHOD OF READING

'1' Ranked method of reading	Teachers S1 mixed ability (remedial extraction)
Individually by each child in class	1
Individually by each child at home	3
Aloud to class as a whole by teacher	10
Aloud to class as a whole by volunteer pupil	1
Aloud to class as a whole by selected pupil	0
Aloud to class as a whole by each pupil in turn	1
Aloud to groups formed in class	0

Of the 17 teachers then, who had S1 mixed ability classes from which remedial pupils were extracted, 12 used some form of reading aloud as their method for reading most pages of the novel and ten did the reading aloud themselves. It is difficult to conclude from this that having such pupils extracted affected the teacher's choice of reading method.

It does seem though, that having pupils with reading difficulties in classes where the reading of most pages of the class novel is done aloud in class, is likely to be a problem for many teachers,

particularly (as we shall see in the next section) if pupils are required to complete assignments on the novel during or at the end of the reading.

4.2.3 The Types of Assignments Set on the Class Novel

Two questions on the questionnaire dealt with this issue - Questions 7 and 8. Question 7 attempted to establish whether teachers who use class novels in S1 and S2 set assignments on the novel with the following result :

TABLE 43 ASSIGNMENTS SET

Yes	122
No	1

When they were then asked if any of these required the pupils to re-read parts of the novel, the result was :

TABLE 44 RE-READING REQUIRED

Yes	121
No	1

Thus there was almost unanimous agreement amongst teachers in this survey on both these questions. The implications for pupils with reading difficulties (discussed earlier) of the second of these findings will be noted. However for more detailed information we have to look at responses to Question 8 which asked teachers to evaluate

various kinds of writing assignment in terms of the amount of tim pupils spent on each . Listed below in order of importance with th type of assignment ranked as '1' by most teachers first, are th results :

TABLE 45 RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Questions / Assignments:	Ranked '1'	Ranked '2'
1. using novel as stimulus for writing	67	29
2. on the novel's storyline	52	40
3. on the novel's theme(s)	11	22
4. on author's purpose(s) / techniques	1	12
5. other	1	9

Where the first ranked assignments are concerned then, two type dominate - questions on the novel's storyline and assignments usin the novel or parts of the novel as a stimulus for creative or persona writing. Together these two types of assignment account for 11 teachers in the survey who ranked one of these as '1' or '1='. Eve allowing for the fact that here, with the total number of '1' ranking being 132, a maximum of eight teachers could have done this, the 11 total is still very notable.

However it is interesting to note that when one looks at the '2 rankings for this question, the picture is different. 'Questions o the novel's storyline' still stands out as the most frequently ranke second option, but there is a much narrower gap between option d)

which is still in second place, and 'questions on the novel's theme'. The relatively low score of this type of assignment in the '1' rankings may be seen as perhaps surprising, as is perhaps the virtual exclusion of 'questions on the author's purpose(s) and techniques' which only one teacher in the survey rated as the type of assignment upon which pupils would spend most time.

CHAPTER 5 SOME COMMENTS ON FINDINGS

From previous chapters three 'Key Issues' have been identified and reported upon : the importance of the class novel; the methods of reading the class novel; and the types of assignments set on the class novel. It is with these that the present commentary is concerned.

5.1 The Importance of the Class Novel

In the survey, one particular aspect of the class novel's "importance" was looked at and that was defined on the questionnaire as being importance "in terms of time spent in class." However, as noted, one of the clearest facts to emerge from the survey is the widespread nature of the use of class novels. Of the 122 teachers in Question 1 a) who had a First or Second year class on their timetable in the year of the survey, 115 (94%), said they used a class novel with either or both classes (Question 1 - see 4.1.1 above).

There appears little doubt then that the class novel is considered to be very important indeed. In fact it is considered to be the most important component of the English course by a very substantial number of teachers of both S1 and S2 mixed ability classes. The findings of the survey show (see 4.1.13 TABLE 23 and 4.2 TABLE 24), that 67 of the

101 (66%) teachers in the survey who had S1 mixed ability classes ranked it '1' and a large number of teachers of both S1 and S2 used three or more class novels per session (see 4.2 TABLE 25). The component of the course which came second in terms of the numbers of teachers ranking it '1' was 'Non text-based units of work' with 15 (15%) - a considerable way behind the class novel's 67.

With teachers of S2 mixed ability classes the picture was very similar: 55 of the 86 (64%) teachers in the survey who had S2 mixed ability classes ranked the class novel as '1' according to the above criterion. The component which came second here was also 'Non text-based units of work' this time with 12 (14%).

One possibility which must be considered here is that of the nature of the evidence: is Lanark, from where the bulk of the evidence in the survey is derived, somehow unique ? This question has been discussed earlier (see 3.4 above) where it was suggested that it contained no features which would make it strikingly a-typical; but it should also be remembered that some of the evidence came from three comprehensive schools in Manchester. When this evidence is examined separately (see Appendix V), the same broad trends in the findings as a whole are confirmed, suggesting perhaps that there are no outstanding reasons for believing Lanark to be peculiar in this regard.

These facts indicate then, the central position occupied by th single class novel in the teaching of English in the first and secon years of secondary school. Though it may appear obvious to some, thi fact, as far as it is possible to judge from the professiona literature, has never been revealed - in fact it has often bee denied. The importance of 'narrative' in the teaching of English o the other hand - an issue we will return to - is more readil recognised.

These findings are all the more remarkable given the historica background to the class novel. We have already seen in Chapter 2 ho individual commentators on English teaching from MacPherson t Whitehead and Holbrook, and official reports from Newbolt to Bullock have unequivocally condemned it. Why there should be such a disparit between what is 'officially' approved of and what teachers actually d is an interesting question, especially since, in spite of the fac that government (and other) publications often go out of their way t specifically condemn the practice, using class novels turns out to b the very thing that teachers of English use as the main component o their English courses in S1 and S2.

Part of the explanation for this situation is undoubtedly th quality of the research into classroom practice - there is a strikin scarcity of 'observational' research in English teaching and what doe exist, is often ambiguous and imprecise as we have seen in Chapter 2.

Even prestigious and important surveys such as that carried out by the Bullock committee, produced data that were unclear and ambiguous because the questions on the questionnaire - at least as far as classroom reading was concerned - were too general.

On the other hand it may have something to do with the nature of writing on English teaching. Much of it is what one might describe as 'expert opinion' which, however 'expert', is still essentially 'opinion' often very subjective and seldom (as we have seen in Chapter 2) backed up with anything stronger than impression or anecdote or, occasionally, teaching experience. Frequently it is advocacy of one set of ideas or another - aimed not so much at discovering what was actually happening in English classrooms, as advocating what should be happening. This is the case with Whitehead (1966), Holbrook (1967) and, in spite of its survey, with much of the Bullock Report.

Taken together, this body of 'expert opinion' came to form a theory of English teaching providing teachers and, perhaps more significantly, teacher-trainers with advice about what a good English teacher should or should not be doing. One of the things unanimously agreed that he or she should not be doing was the class novel. No doubt with some English teachers this theory became practice and attempts were made at alternative methods of novel reading, perhaps using the group method suggested by Holbrook (1967) or the less precise "individualised reading" recommended in Bullock (D.E.S.1975 -

p133). But since no thorough investigation into what teachers of English actually did in the classroom (at least in relation to novels) was ever undertaken, there arose a view about what was and what was not, acceptable as 'good' practice. The use of the single text class novel was not acceptable. Once established, this attitude was disseminated by colleges of education and L.E.A. advisers to the point where few teachers would feel able to publically oppose it for fear of being seen as rejecting progressive expert opinion, even if, in the privacy of their own classrooms, they were actually doing something completely different. Thus it is that Calthrop (1971) reports:

"...for some teachers the very term 'class reader' is a loaded one. It was noticeable that some of the teachers I interviewed in depth, and who supported the use of the class reader, were unnecessarily defensive..." (p23)

There is evidence then, as we have seen in more detail in Chapter 2, that a situation such as this might have been in existence for many years - in other words that teachers have continued to use class novels in spite of the disapproval to be found in government and educational publicatons. This is perhaps more surprising now than in the past, since with the advent of comprehensive schools, and with them, mixed ability classes in the first and second years, the problems facing a teacher of English planning to use one novel with the whole class, might have been expected to be more complex. For

example, course planning would be more problematical - having to find one novel suitable for use with a class composed of every level of reading ability from the highly skilled to the illiterate. This of course is assuming that every teacher is primarily concerned with meeting the individual needs of each pupil in his or her class when planning a course - a somewhat idealised view which may not always obtain.

Yet the evidence of my survey is that neither the exhortations to individualise class reading that continue to abound in professional publications on English teaching, nor the advent of mixed ability classes in the lower years of the secondary school, has done anything to deter teachers of English from using class novels. Indeed there is room for the interesting speculation that the advent of mixed ability classes has encouraged the use of the class novel. If this could be demonstrated it would be remarkable in the sense that any such increase in the use of the class novel could not easily be explained by reference to 'tradition' - it may perhaps have to be seen as an attempt to improve the curriculum by placing more emphasis on literature. Unfortunately the absence of detailed survey evidence from non-comprehensive secondary schools in previous years makes this proposition impossible to test.

But that still leaves us with the question as to why teachers of English continue to use class novels. In my own survey there are some

interesting indicators.

In Question 10, teachers were actually asked why they choose to use a class novel with their S1 or S2 mixed ability class. Two reasons dominated the responses to this question. The main reason given by 58 teachers (48% of all those who had S1/2 mixed ability classes) was "the shared experience of a class novel is important". This reason might seem to indicate some kind of theoretical basis for the choice, (a point which is discussed in the next section of this chapter); but the second reason most frequently cited was "it is easier to organise work for the class if all pupils have read the same novel". This was given as the main reason for using a class novel by 31 teachers (25% of those who had S1/2 mixed ability classes) and might be taken to indicate that ease of organisation of classwork is a higher priority with some teachers than meeting more theoretically sound educational objectives.

If we consider that these two reasons for using class novels accounted for 73% of those teachers who had mixed ability classes in the survey then it seems clear that some further discussion of this fact is warranted.

5.1.1 Shared Experience

The emphasis on "shared experience" as a reason for using a class novel is interesting - with 58 teachers ranking it '1' it attracted almost twice as many such rankings as the next most popular reason (which was 'It is easier to organise work for the class as a whole if all the pupils have read the same novel' with 31 '1' rankings). We have already seen in Chapter 2 that this has been recognised for many years - both Calthrop (1971) and Bullock (1975) refer to it. In the case of Bullock it appears in 9.21 (p134) where it is explained that the report's recommendation of an expansion in individualised reading should be seen as complementary to "group attention to a text". Reference is made here to "the process of sharing" - so although the report criticises the use of the "class novel", it recognises the importance of pupils 'sharing' a literary experience. Calthrop (1971) sees this as one of the peculiarly important factors in the use of a class novel. In common with the Bullock Report however, he fails to analyse what exactly this experience is, and how it comes to be "shared". Scant consideration is given to the make-up of the various classes doing the 'sharing', though he takes evidence from teachers of grammar school classes, secondary modern classes and comprehensive school classes. In the case of comprehensive school classes it would have been useful to know if they were mixed ability classes which contained the full range of reading ability and a broad social mix.

For such classes to 'share' the same novel some interesting problems would have to have been confronted by the teacher, such as how to involve in the "process of sharing" pupils with reading difficulties unable to read the novel unaided.

Novels by their very nature tend to deal with social issues, with the individual as part of a society and might therefore appeal to English teachers as a literary form ideally suited to the 'social' treatment implied by the idea of 'shared experience'. Calthrop (1971) in fact refers to the class reader producing a "sense of community" (p3) within a class. The ideal of "shared experience" is of course very much more difficult to achieve in a classroom situation where the emphasis is on what is described in Bullock (D.E.S.1975) as "individualised reading" meaning individual pupils silently reading different books. That is unless the "individualised reading" is the silent reading of the same (class) novel individually by each child in class - a possibility which, as we have seen earlier (see 2.9), is not even considered in the Bullock Report. Any other option for novel reading other than the class novel option, would reduce the scope for "shared experience". If numbers of pupils within the class choose to read the same novel and are grouped according to their choice of novel, the class unit is broken down. In a mixed ability class this may be along ability lines with the most able group 'sharing' the experience of one novel, the least able another and so on. This appears to be what Holbrook had in mind when he welcomed the move away from 'class' to 'group' reading of novels - he talked about each group within the class "having a novel suited to its reading age" (see

Holbrook (1967), p183). For Holbrook, it would appear, any "shared experience" would be between pupils of similar reading ability and would not involve the whole class. This approach would certainly be more problematic for the teacher in terms of classroom organisation involving as it would, different numbers of different books (not to mention variable reading speeds) and may thus deter some teachers. On the other hand, it may be that today, many teachers of mixed ability classes would see this as divisive socially or educationally or both and rely on their own judgement to select one novel suitable for the whole class to share. This then raises two questions:

a) what exactly is meant by "shared experience";

b) why do teachers of English feel it is important.

One way of ensuring that all pupils 'share' the experience of a novel is to have the novel read aloud to them - this would work irrespective of the composition of the class in terms of reading ability. Using this method of reading, the novel would be shared at least at the narrative level because all the pupils would be able to follow the story. Whether, thereafter, they would be able to 'share' anything else about the novel is more difficult to say. But commentators like Calthrop (1971) would still see value in this for pupils:

"A shared experience.....makes them happier, even where they don't fully understand it" (p4)

Given the fact, mentioned earlier, that 88% of teachers (out of a total of 107) used some form of reading aloud as the method by which most pages of the novel are read (see 4.1.3 above), it is worth considering what kind of 'shared experience' of literature is being offered pupils here.

The kinds of writing assignments that teachers set on the novel perhaps throw some light on this. TABLE 15 (in 4.1.8 above), shows that two types of writing assignment dominate: assignments using (parts of) the novel as a stimulus for personal / creative writing and questions on the novel's storyline. The second of these would seem to confirm that a large part of what is being shared is the story. It could be argued that a class novel, most of whose pages are read aloud to the class by the teacher, which is then used principally as a source of narrative information, is hardly offering the pupils an educational experience in reading worth sharing.

But the fact that the most frequently ranked '1' option in this table is the one which refers to the use of the novel as a stimulus for personal / creative writing perhaps indicates that teachers see the class novel as a means of stimulating the reflection on, and the sharing of, personal experience among pupils in the same class. In a mixed ability class this might mean an exchange or sharing of a wider

range of experience than would be the case in a class composed entirely of pupils of similar ability (and perhaps social background).

Two views on the use of novels in schools are worth considering at this point.

On the one hand there is the critical view - taken by Blampain (1979) - which argues that this way of reading novels is the antithesis of how novels are meant to be read. Novels are meant to be read silently, individually, at one sitting and not aloud, in groups over several weeks. (Though it is questionable whether there has been any direct influence, it is possible to identify here echoes of the view expressed in Newbolt (1921), about literature being difficult to use in the classroom.) To aim at some 'shared experience' through reading aloud in class therefore is to use the novel not as a means of developing individuals by providing them with an educational experience tailor-made to meet their individual needs, but rather as a means of social control by enforced participation where every individual irrespective of personal interest, particular need or reading ability, 'shares' in the experience of a novel selected by the teacher as being 'suitable'. The class novel then is seen as one of the means by which society inculcates in its younger generation a sense of respect for its established literature, culture and values. The fact that this experience can be simultaneously shared in a mixed ability class by all irrespective of ability or social class, makes it all the more powerful an instrument.

On a lower level this idea of social control might be taken to mean that the class novel is used as a means of disciplining a class. This was certainly true for the Head of Department of a secondary modern school cited by Calthrop (1971) (in a footnote to Chapter 1) who felt that :

"...this process of drawing in the children together was of such value that it helped in the discipline in the school." (p5)

Though in my survey no such reason was specifically identified as contributing to the decision to use a class novel, it is interesting to note that the reason for choosing to read the class novel aloud rated '1' by most teachers was "it overcomes the problem of pupils with reading difficulties who could not read the novel silently by themselves" (see 4.1.11, TABLE 20). One of the problems associated with having such pupils in the class might be discipline and this might have been a factor in the popularity of this reason.

On the other hand it is possible to take a more positive, perhaps even egalitarian view. It is possible to see in the use of the class novel something of George Sampson's ideal - expressed in Sampson (1921) - of an English curriculum in which literature is central for all pupils irrespective of background or indeed reading ability. The challenge to the teacher of having opted for this approach to classroom reading is to find a way of giving access to the world of literature by means of the novel, to pupils some of whom, in the mixed

ability class, may be quite unable to read a book unaided. To share the experience of the same novel with one's peers is to share in the literary heritage of one's culture. This of course could be considered more of a social than an educational consequence of using a class novel; but it is notable that in Calthrop (1971), the teachers he spoke to who are cited in the section on 'Shared Experience' in Chapter 1, speak about "the resulting sense of community" (mentioned already) from sharing a class novel as being "a deeply educative process".

Thus it may be that teachers have high motives in choosing to use class novels such as the desire to involve every pupil in the literature of his/her culture. The view, implicit in this argument, that literature can be socially binding, is by no means new, but remains open to debate. The Newbolt Committee in 1921 took the view in its report that the study of English language and literature could have a unifying social function - indeed it could help overcome class divisions :

"... the common discipline and enjoyment of it, the common possession of the tastes and associations connected with it, would form a new element of national unity, linking together the mental life of all classes by experiences which have hitherto been the privilege of a limited section." (Board of Education 1921, p15)

It could be that, although not evident from TABLE 19 (see 4.1.10 above), some such justification lies behind the "shared experience"

reason for using a class novel given by such large numbers of teachers in my survey.

There are those who would argue the opposite - that literature is (or should be) subversive - that the teaching of literature should therefore be aimed at preparing the pupil not for acceptance of his / her place and role in society but against it. This view was expressed by George Sampson, himself an influential member of the Newbolt Committee (see Sampson 1921, p11). This apparent contradiction is perhaps explained by seeing "the privilege of a limited section" referred to in the report, as a liberal education, hitherto denied to the majority, which enabled people to think for themselves and question their society. Undoubtedly however, Sampson had stronger views than most on this subject - a fact which illustrates something of the range of opinions on the aims of teaching English that have always characterised this debate.

It is possible then to argue that the 'social' aspect of a novel is not to be seen in its reception but in its function and its subject matter and that these will often make the novel 'anti-society'. However in the case of a class novel that is read aloud to a class the 'reception' of the novel is of crucial importance. It may take on something of the character of a soap opera, where its characters theme and plot are unfolded to a class over a period of time (perhaps months). Possible directions of plot, decisions of characters and treatments of themes may be discussed by the class in the process of the reading even if written assignments on them are not set. Such an

'unfolding' process may well have some 'binding' affect on the clas
even where the novel's subject matter is critical of society.

The method of reading the novel therefore may be seen as central t
this whole process since it is the method of reading which is th
enabling factor in this sharing process.

Before going on to discuss this second key issue however, it i
necessary to discuss the second main reason teachers gave for choosin
to use a class novel.

5.1.2 Makes for Easier Organisation of Classwork

It might appear that the 31 teachers who gave this as their mai
reason for choosing to use a class novel with their S1 and / or S
mixed ability class were being pragmatic rather than philosophical i
justifying their choice. If all the pupils in a given class have rea
the same novel then it is easier for the teacher to organise the wor
for the class. That seems self evident. However, the question of wha
kind of class we are dealing with is important - whether or not th
class is a mixed ability one may seem less important here than it wa
with the other reason dealt with above, but it does have some bearing.
The teacher of a mixed ability class might be expected to have mor
problems in organising programmes of work over a range of novels AND

range of abilities (if more than one novel was being read in the class at any one time), than the teacher of a set or streamed class where the major increase in workload would be the range of novels only. It could be argued therefore that teachers of mixed ability classes might be more disposed to the use of the class novel since it would present them with fewer problems in the preparation of work even though there might be other problems that would be greater. As has been mentioned above however, the lack of suitable comparative data from pre-comprehensive days makes it impossible to be certain on this point.

Interestingly enough, in my own survey, seven teachers (from incidently, five different schools) did have 'set or streamed' S2 classes and all seven used class novels with them. The absence of mixed ability classes at least where these teachers were concerned, did not seem to make them less likely to use class novels. And once again we have the implicit evidence from the work of people like Whitehead (1966) who assumes the use of class novels to be the norm in grammar schools - he in fact is critical of what he calls "the tradition of the single class reader" (p59) in grammar schools (see 2.6 above) clearly implying that this practice was both widespread and time-honoured. The number of teachers who ranked this very practical reason as their main one for choosing to use a class novel does seem to indicate that the day to day practicalities of teaching and what makes life easier for the teacher, could be important factors in deciding on what to use in class, irrespective of what the prevailing

orthodoxy might be.

Nevertheless, there still seems to be something of a contradiction here: teachers of mixed ability classes choose to use single class novels for practical reasons in spite of the fact that the very choice of a class novel must present them with a different set of very difficult - some might say more intractable problems such as having present in the class pupils incapable of reading the chosen novel unaided. As we have seen (see 4.1.2, TABLE 7) a large number of teachers of first and second year mixed ability classes in the survey - over 70% in each case - said they had three or more such pupils per class who would be unable to read the novel chosen by them as the class novel. This is particularly significant in view of the fact, established in Question 7 of the survey, that virtually every teacher sets assignments on the class novel that require pupils to re-read parts of the novel (see 4.1.7, TABLE 12). The fact that at least three pupils per class would find such assignments very difficult is either not considered by the teachers to be a major practical problem or they have a satisfactory means of dealing with it.

As far as the first of these possibilities is concerned we might look again at the types of writing assignments set. In the survey "questions on the novel's storyline" was listed as the type of

assignment on which pupils would spend most class time by 52 teachers. It seems fair to assume that this type of assignment would require quite a detailed re-reading of parts of the novel and with 43% of the sample claiming that this was the type of assignment upon which they had pupils spend most class time, it does seem to indicate a serious practical problem. The only type of assignment to receive more '1' rankings from teachers was "using (parts of) the novel as a stimulus for personal / creative writing" which 67 teachers - 55% of the sample - ranked as the type of assignment upon which they would have pupils spend most class time. If the parts of the novel used as the stimulus had to be re-read by the pupils - a reasonable possibility for at least some classes - then once again it is possible to see here a problem arising.

It seems then that a problem does exist in this area of the organisation of classwork which might lead one to wonder whether using a class novel really does solve more problems that it creates in terms of organising classwork. It could be that teachers when they opt to use a class novel are unaware of these problems - they are, after all, essentially problems only for pupils with reading difficulties who may constitute a relatively small proportion of the class. Or it could be that teachers have a solution to it. Some indication of what the position is on this may be found in the teachers' methodologies - a discussion of which follows.

5.2 Methods of Reading the Class Novel

5.2.1 The Importance of Being Precise

It is perhaps in the area of methods of reading that the most surprising gaps in the research on aspects of English teaching lie. Invariably only two methods of reading are assumed : 'silent' and 'aloud'. Thereafter the issues are frequently clouded: in the case of 'silent' reading by the assumption (made for example in the Bullock survey - see 2.9 above) that pupils reading silently in class are reading 'individually' in the sense that they are reading books they themselves have chosen; in the case of reading 'aloud' by the assumption that it is 'reading round the class'. In fact, as I have shown in the previous chapter (see 4.1.3 - TABLE 9), reading aloud in class can be classified into at least five categories. The failure to be precise on this vital aspect of the day to day work of an English classroom has been a characteristic of every survey of classroom practice we have looked at (see Chapter 2). Perhaps in the case of grammar schools, researchers need not have concerned themselves unduly with this issue since it could have been assumed that all pupils in such schools could read fairly fluently. In other contexts however, particularly where comprehensive schools were concerned, this failure has seriously diminished the value of the research.

5.2.2 Mixed Ability Implications

Using a class novel with a mixed ability class poses a number of difficulties for the teacher, not the least of which is how the novel is to be read. The major problem here is the possible existence in the class of a pupil or pupils whose reading ability is not up to the individual silent reading of the novel. This might affect the way the teacher decides to have the novel read. If a significant number of pupils in any mixed ability class are unable to read unaided the novel selected by the teacher as the class novel, then the teacher may decide that individual silent reading of the novel (at home or in class) would be fruitless, since the problems that would thereby arise for the pupils with reading difficulties and consequently for the teacher, would be too great. The evidence from the survey strongly suggests this : only 27 teachers - 22% - ranked any form of individualised reading as their main method of reading the novel, and fewer than 20% ranked any form of individualised reading as their second main method of reading (see TABLE 9 in 4.1.3). The question of how many pupils such as this in any class constitute a significant problem for the teacher has been raised: for some teachers one such pupil may be a serious problem. From my own experience of twelve years of teaching mixed ability first and second year classes in four different comprehensive schools I would suggest, as in the previous chapter, that three or more such pupils in a class (where the maximum class size is 30) begins to present the teacher with serious practical problems where the reading of anything is concerned. It is interesting therefore to note that, as mentioned in the previous section,

Question 2 of the survey (see 4.1.2) showed that there were 76 mixed ability S1 classes (out of a total of 101 - 75%) and 58 mixed ability S2 classes (out of a total of 86 - 67%), in which three or more pupils, in the opinion of the teacher, would have had difficulty in reading unaided the novel selected for use as the class novel. To use any form of individual silent reading with such classes - whether in class or at home - as a means of getting the class novel read, could be expected to produce major organisational and classroom management problems for the teacher.

The existence of such pupils in a class would seem to pose a number of problems. For instance, for the 32 teachers in the survey - 26% of the sample - whose main method of reading the novel was to read it aloud "regularly" i.e. perhaps one period per week while continuing with other work unrelated to the class novel (see TABLE 11 in 4.1.5).

Similarly, the existence of such pupils in a class would make reading 'round the class' difficult to operate since it would expose the reading difficulties of these pupils to the unnecessary and potentially humiliating glare of the whole class. However, in spite of Holbrook's hopes in the mid-sixties about 'reading round the class' having already gone (see 2.7 above), it is interesting to note here that this method of reading the novel is not entirely dead - some 10 teachers in my survey (8%) used it as the method by which most pages of the novel were read (see 4.1.3). Nevertheless reading aloud most or all of the novel in class, might be expected to overcome most of the organisational problems posed by individual silent reading. Indeed in

the survey 107 teachers (out of a total of 122 who in the survey had S1 or S2 classes - 88%) said that when they used a class novel, some form of reading aloud was the method by which most pages of the novel were read. Apart from the 10 teachers who used 'aloud to the class as a whole by each pupil in turn' just mentioned, the other 'reading aloud' methods used were by:

(i) the teacher
(ii) volunteer pupil(s)
(iii) selected pupil(s)

Options (ii) and (iii) above might be seen to be indulging certain pupils and might be divisive within the class. Thus the option of reading aloud himself / herself might be seen by the teacher as the most practical option. This perhaps explains the extraordinarily high number of teachers who read aloud themselves as the main method by which most pages of the novel were read - 83 in fact (from a total of 122 - some 68%). It is possible to see in this a control element - with the reading aloud being done by the teacher, his or her authority (and, it could be argued, the authority of the narrative) would be enhanced. The interesting footnote to Chapter 1 of Calthrop (1971), mentioned in 5.1.1 above) comes to mind again here where the influence of the class novel on school discipline is referred to (p5).

Interestingly in response to Question 11 on the questionnaire - 'Why did you choose to spend class time reading aloud?' - the reason ranked '1' by most teachers (49 in fact) was "it overcomes the problem of

pupils with reading difficulties who could not read the novel silently by themselves" (see 4.2.11). This would appear to confirm the earlier finding of TABLE 28 (see 4.2.1) where, of the 55 teachers who gave as their main problem in using a class novel with a mixed ability class the fact that not every pupil would be able to read the novel unaided, 78% used some form of reading aloud as the method by which most pages of the novel were read.

This would appear to be in line with the suggestion discussed earlier, that class novels may be chosen for pragmatic reasons - the class novel is seen as a solution to a practical problem - namely how to organise work for a mixed ability class; reading aloud is seen as a solution to a practical problem posed by having chosen the class novel - namely how to cope with the fact that in a mixed ability class there may be pupils unable to read the novel chosen by the teacher. Taken together with the relatively high number of teachers - 20 - who ranked the third reason offered in this question as '1' which was "it ensures that every pupil goes through the novel at the same rate, thus making it easier to organise classwork", reading aloud seems to be seen by many teachers as a very powerful practical aid. These two unashamedly pragmatic reasons for choosing to read aloud account for 56% of the sample. Indeed, as TABLE 33 showed (see 4.2), those teachers who use some form of reading aloud in class as the method by which most pages of the class novel are read, tend to be those who give as their main reason for doing so, the fact that it ensures that every pupil goes through the novel at the same rate.

However, a good number of teachers (45) ranked "reading aloud is a valuable experience in itself" as their main reason for choosing to spend class time reading aloud (the discrepancy in the total was explained in Chapter 4). This can not be considered a 'pragmatic' reason and perhaps can be related to the "shared experience" aspect of doing a class novel (discussed above) seen by many teachers as very important.

Amongst the 20 'other' reasons given, 'it aids comprehension' and the fact that it encourages interest and enjoyment were the two most prominent. Even here it is possible to suggest a 'pragmatic' and 'unpragmatic' distinction - aiding comprehension would be a pragmatic reason for choosing to read aloud while encouraging interest and enjoyment might be closer to the 'valuable experience in itself' reason.

It may be of course that part of the explanation for this prevalence of reading aloud is that the teacher feels that he / she is the most skilled and expressive reader (one teacher, as was noted in 4.1.11, did in fact give this under the 'other' option for Question 11) or that doing most or all of the reading gives the teacher a greater sense of control over the class (a possibility taken up again in Chapter 6). Whatever the explanation, it seems likely that very pragmatic considerations figure largely in the decision to use reading aloud as the main means of reading the novel.

5.2.3 Reading Aloud : Problems

Reading a novel aloud in class does however present its own problems. For one thing, novels tend to be lengthy and thus the reading has to be spread over a number of periods. Depending on how this is done, the reading of the novel can take weeks. In Question 5 of the questionnaire, I was able to define three possible ways of reading a novel aloud in class :

(i) continuously without interruption during successive periods until it was finished;

(ii) continuously during successive periods but with interruptions for writing assignments;

(iii) regularly (e.g. one period per week) while carrying on with other work unrelated to the class novel.

Of the three methods above, the first is by far the quickest; but even using this method, an average sized novel for First year (say The Silver Sword by Ian Serraillier), could take up to eleven one hour periods to read aloud in class. Assuming a maximum weekly allocation of four hours for English - a generous allocation judging by the survey in the Bullock Report (D.E.S. 1975) - the reading of the class novel using this, the quickest method, would take about three weeks. (In my survey only four teachers claim to use this method). It can therefore be seen that using either of the other two methods would almost certainly mean the reading of the novel being spread out over

months rather than weeks. These two methods were the most popular in the survey: method (ii) above was used by 75 teachers - 61% - and method (iii) by 32 teachers - 26%. Under these circumstances a potentially serious practical problem for the teacher of any class - mixed ability, set or streamed - would be absenteeism. If the class regularly has a number of pupils absent, the teachers may face organisational problems.

Once again, the question of how many absentees begins to constitute a problem for the teacher doing a class novel, is debatable, but for the sake of this discussion we might assume, as with pupils with reading difficulties, that three or more might be problematical. In the survey (Question 2 b) - see 4.1.2 above), there were 33 S1 classes and 41 S2 classes which normally had three or more pupils absent per period. But of course these were all mixed ability classes and therein lies a further difficulty. If some of the absentees from such mixed ability classes happen to be the pupils with reading difficulties who are unable to catch up on the reading by reading silently themselves, the teacher is faced with a problem. He must try to ensure that such pupils get the part(s) of the storyline that they missed. Coping with absentees therefore, could in some circumstances, be a major headache for the class teacher. This problem might be exacerbated if, at the end of the reading of the class novel, the pupils are required to complete assignments on the novel's storyline or, potentially even more problematical - as indicated in the previous section - attempt assignments which require the pupils to re-read parts of the novel. (This issue will be returned to again in the next section of this

chapter.)

While reading aloud then may seem to offer the teacher of a mixed ability class a solution to one very practical problem, it does itself present the teachers with other problems. For instance, in the survey (see TABLE 35 in 4.2), of the 76 teachers of S1 mixed ability classes who used some form of reading aloud as their method of reading most pages of the class novel, 27 (36%) reported normally having three or more pupils absent per period. This level of absenteeism, it could be argued, might pose considerable problems for the teacher in ensuring that every pupil was getting through the novel. This would be particularly difficult if some of the absentees were pupils with reading difficulties unable to catch up on the reading they missed by reading silently by themselves. In fact, as was seen in TABLE 40 (see 4.2), of 77 teachers of S1 mixed ability classes who used some form of reading aloud as the method by which most pages of the class novel were read, 59 (77%) reported having three or more pupils per class who would have difficulty in reading unaided, the class novel. TABLES 36 and 41 show a similar picture for S2 classes.

On this evidence, it does seem likely that the combination of absenteeism and pupils with reading difficulties, might present special problems for the teacher of a mixed abilty class reading aloud a class novel. Yet, in spite of these problems, the survey shows that not only does the class novel dominate the English curriculum in S1

and S2 but that reading it aloud appears to be the dominant method of reading. It could be of course that the alternatives, some of which have been mentioned above, are seen by teachers as even more problematical. Nevertheless it is clear that reading aloud must have a great attraction for English teachers, whether due to ease of use, perceived value, tradition or a combination of such reasons.

5.3 Types of Assignments

We have already discussed (in 5.1.1 above) how the types of assignments set can throw light on what teachers mean by the 'shared experience' of a class novel. But there are other aspects of the assignments that are worth considering. There are two issues in particular which might be looked at here. Firstly, by considering the types of assignments teachers set on the class novel, we can examine the use of the novel in schools. Secondly the practical implications of various types of assignments can be studied thereby throwing light on classroom methodology.

To begin with we might look again at TABLE 43 (see 4.2.3) which showed that all but one of the teachers of S1/2 classes who used class novels in the survey set assignments on the class novel; but from the responses to Question 8, it would appear that many teachers see the class novel as little more than a springboard for other work. What is done with the novel after it has been read is revealed in TABLE 15, given in Chapter 4 but reproduced here. In answer to Question 8

teachers ranked in order of importance the kinds of assignments on which their pupils spent most class time. The numbers of teachers who ranked each type as '1' were as follows :

TABLE 15a

questions on the novel's storyline	52
questions on the novels's theme	11
questions on the author's purpose(s) and techniques	1
assignments using (parts of) the novel as a stimulus for personal / creative writing	67
other	1

Two main types of assignment dominate this table - questions on the novel's storyline which 52 teachers - 43% of the sample - said was the type of assignment on which pupils spent most time; and assignments using the novel as a stimulus for 'personal / creative writing' which 67 teachers - 55% of the sample - said were the type of assignments on which pupils spent most time.

The dominance of these two types of assignment has been commented on

already. But the place of assignments on the novel's storylin
revealed here is worthy of further comment. The picture of a clas
ploughing its way through dozens of questions which elicit onl
literal responses comes to mind here.

The Bullock Report (D.E.S. 1975) then, though unreliable in respec
of information concerning types of classroom reading as we have seer
(see 2.9 above), appears accurate enough when it refers to lessons ir
which the novel is treated as a "hoard of factual information" (9.14 -
p131) - though the report itself does not provide any evidence of hov
prevalent such treatment of the novel is.

Interestingly, as we have already seen, similar complaints about the
treatment of the novel in schools are made by commentators as diverse
as The Newbolt Report (Board of Education 1921) and Blampain (1979)
with reference to France.

However two surprising features of these results have not beer
commented on so far. One is the surprisingly small number of teachers
who ranked "questions on the novel's theme" highly - only elever
ranked such assignments as '1' and only 22 ranked them as '2'.

absence from the ranked '1' assignments of "questions on the author's purpose(s) and techniques". That only one teacher in the survey should have ranked this type of assignment as '1' is surely worth noting especially as this low status is confirmed by the fact that only 12 teachers ranked it '2'. What all this seems to indicate is a treatment of the novel in S1 and S2 mixed ability classes that is non-literary at least in the sense that little importance appears to be attached to studying the literary structures and conventions of the novel. There is little evidence here that literature is being treated in class in the way that was advocated by post-Newbolt commentators and critics like Sampson and later Leavis.

It could be that the presence in the mixed ability class of pupils with serious reading difficulties deters teachers from taking this more intellectually demanding approach to the novel. This would certainly fit in with the findings commented on earlier in this chapter about teachers' views on the importance of "shared experience". What the class novel offers pupils then, is not a literary, intellectually demanding experience but a social experience.

Yet there is evidence, albeit sketchy, that this approach to the novel is not new - in other words that it was not the advent of comprehensive schools with mixed ability classes which brought this

about. If, for example, the comment in the Bullock Report about the novel being seen as a "hoard of factual information" is based on the survey carried out in 1973 prior to the publication of the report, then it would appear that what the report had to say was at least partly based on what was going on in Grammar schools. In the survey, three categories of secondary schools are distinguished :

"1. junior tier comprehensives with an age range 11-13, 11-14, and 11-16 with optional transfer at 13 or 14;

2. senior tier comprehensives with an age range 13-18 and 14-18; comprehensive upper schools starting at age 13;

3. modern; grammar; comprehensive upper schools starting at age 12; 'all-through' comprehensives for the age ranges 11-1 and 11-18; 'other' secondary schools (mostly those formerly known as bilateral and multilateral)." (p360)

Thus two categories of secondary school were exclusively used for comprehensive schools (categories 1 and 2 above). In Table 22 (p361) of the survey, the number of secondary schools which were approached and the number which replied are given. The total number of schools in

these two categories which were approached was 42, of whom 38 replied.

The third category of secondary school included "comprehensive upper schools starting at age twelve; 'all-through' comprehensives for the age ranges 11-16 and 11-18"; as well as grammar schools and other secondary schools, and contained 380 schools which were approached, of whom 354 replied. In other words relatively little of the survey's evidence came from schools in the specifically 'comprehensive' category. Indeed it is clear from Table 22 of the survey that relatively few schools "in the population" came into either of the two categories of 'comprehensive' in 1972/3 - 416 out of 4,714 in January 1972 and 458 out of 4,547 in January 1973. The comments in the report then may be seen as applying generally to the use of the novel in secondary schools at a time when most of them were not comprehensives. (This table from the Bullock survey appears in Appendix VI).

Earlier Whitehead (1966) had criticised the kinds of assignments pupils in grammar schools were asked to do on novels:

"...they almost inevitably focus on inessential or irrelevant aspects of the reading experience...we don't after all read Middlemarch or The Rainbow in order that we may be able to remember the names of the characters or the events of the plot." (p64)

What Whitehead appears to be criticising here is precisely the kinds of assignments on the novel's storyline that my survey suggests are still very prevalent today. The singling out by Whitehead of this particular type of assignment perhaps indicates how common it was. It is by no means clear then that the prevalence of assignments asking only about the novel's storyline is to be explained by the presence in mixed ability classes of pupils with reading difficulties brought about by the move to comprehensive schools. There is no doubt however that in the mixed ability class there are special problems.

If we consider for a moment the practical implications of this for such classes, we have the possibility, raised earlier, of some pupils with reading difficulties missing through absence, parts (or all) of the reading aloud in class, being then asked to spend most of their time in class answering questions on the novel's storyline. It is very difficult to see anything 'educative' about this experience. The fact that 87 teachers (71%) said the way they coped with this problem was to summarise the section the pupils missed "orally" hardly mitigates this concern (see 4.1.1 TABLE 10). Indeed 29 teachers (24%) said their main method for coping with this was to rely on the pupils catching up by reading silently the sections they missed. If this method was used for all absentees (including those pupils with reading difficulties who might be absent), then this finding is remarkable. It seems to be suggesting that a solution to the problem of having amongst the

absentees during the reading aloud, pupils who are unable to read the novel on their own, is to have these pupils catch up on the sections they missed by reading silently themselves! This might indicate that some teachers, as was suggested earlier, are simply unaware of some of the problems associated with using a class novel in this way.

CHAPTER 6 FURTHER DISCUSSION

Responses to Question 13 (see TABLE 23 in 4.1.13) in the survey indicated clearly that the class novel is seen by teachers of both S1 and S2 mixed ability classes as being the most important component of their classroom teaching and that (from responses to Question 9 - see TABLE 16 in 4.1.9), an average of three class novels would be used per teacher, per session.

In spite of this, as we have seen in previous chapters, not enough attention has been focused on basic classroom issues related to the use of class novels such as methods of reading and types of assignment. Some of the serious questions of theory and methodology raised by these two issues have been discussed in the previous chapter. Here, some rather more general, but nonetheless important questions will be addressed.

6.1 Putting the Findings in Perspective

To begin with one might consider what all this tells us about the teaching of English in S1 and S2. In particular it is worth asking whether the picture of the teaching of English that emerges from my survey is one which should be greeted with approbation. To do this however entails establishing what the aims, objectives and methods of English teaching in S1 and S2 are. Therein lies a major problem. We have already seen how much of the writing on the teaching of English

is advocacy and essentially subjective. The dearth of objective data on the teaching of English has resulted in a kind of perpetual debate, involving not only teachers of English in schools, but parents, literary critics, industrialists and politicians, about what English should be. Very little has been written on what English is. It is thus extremely difficult to come up with a set of objective criteria against which to measure the teaching of English at any given time. It might have been expected that the committee of enquiry headed by Sir Alan Bullock would have solved this particular problem in its report (D.E.S., 1975); but as A.K.Pugh has shown, the debate has continued just as strongly since its publication. A critical survey of the debate over aims and objectives for the teaching of English appears in Pugh (1981), where it is clear that there has not been a time in living memory (the last fifty years or so) when a definitive statement of them existed. It is possible however to see trends in the teaching of English this century - Pugh (1981) suggests three :

a) functional uses of language
b) literature
c) personal and social development (p88).

These may be seen as having developed Dixon's "three models or images" for English (see Dixon (1967) pp 1-2). Dixon regarded them as having lead historically on one from the other so that what he calls "personal growth" is not only the most recent but also, according to him, the most important. Pugh's more recent extension of this to include "social development" may be accepted without difficulty. Using

these ideas, it may be possible to place what my survey has revealed, in some kind of perspective. Particularly relevant in this regard will be b) and c). Put another way, how does what we have discovered about English teaching in S1 and S2 relate to the idea that the teaching of English should be centrally concerned with literature and personal growth or development ?

6.2 Personal Growth

We might begin with a statement from the Bullock Report :

"In Britain the tradition of literature teaching is one which aims at personal amd moral growth" (D.E.S. 1975; 9.2 p125).

How accurate this claim is may be debatable - if it has been true of English teaching it may be true for only a certain period in the teaching of English perhaps the period surrounding the Dartmouth conference in 1966 - but it is certainly true that current attitudes to English teaching as represented by much of the writing on the subject since the Bullock Report, have been influenced by the ideas of personal and moral growth and more recently by social awareness.

However, the extent of teachers' reliance on assignments which ask about the novel's storyline discussed above, seems to cast some doubt on this claim. It is difficult to see how the setting of assignments of this kind can be used to justify the view that the tradition of literature teaching in Britain is concerned with "personal and moral

growth". Yet here we have a remarkable 43% of teachers in this survey saying that those are the types of assignments on which they would have their pupils would spend most time.

Certainly the figure of 67 teachers who gave "personal / creative writing" as the type of assignments on which pupils spend most time on the face of it, appears to offer some justification for the view expressed in the Bullock Report of the "tradition" of literature teaching in Britain. But even here there is scope for some scepticism particularly where 'creative' assignments are concerned.

6.2.1 'Creative Writing' and Personal Growth

The 'creative' assignments that teachers set are likely to include such things as imaginary diary entries, imaginary newspaper or TV reports, short story writing etc. - genres which many pupils in S1/2 mixed ability classes would find difficult to tackle at anything above the most rudimentary level. Given their exposure to all kinds of genres on television at least, this may seem odd. It is undoubtedly true that children can very easily create narratives but it is equally true, in my experience at least, that they they have great difficulty in the more sophisticated skills of crafting such basic storylines into particular recognisable genres. An example might be a pupil who, in response to an assignment which requires a newspaper report, produces a substantial piece of narrative writing running perhaps to several pages. This piece may lack the style, tone and structure of such a report but may be very competently written for all that. The

teacher may then find him/herself in the difficult 'moral' position of having to respond to an honest, but inadequate attempt by a pupil to write in such a genre. While the attempt may be the best which that particular pupil can offer, the teacher may experience a 'moral' dilemma over praising it as an attempt at that genre. This type of assignment where pupils are required to 'role-play' and then to write fiction in a specific genre is particularly problematical. The obvious question to ask is why require children, in this case at the S1 and S2 stage, to do this ? It may have something to do with exposing them to a variety of language experiences but if their attempt at a 'newspaper report' is indistinguishable from their attempt at a 'short story' which in itself is little more than a sequence of events in some sort of narrative style, where is the variety of language experience and should we be encouraging and praising such forms of writing ?

On issues as basic as this, the case for English being a subject centrally concerned with "personal and moral growth" runs into difficulty. Giving praise to a pupil for an attempt at writing in a genre which one knows to be beyond his ability is dishonest. But it is also patronising and, in the long run, may damage the pupil's trust in the teacher as a caring but honest figure with a role to play in his / her personal and moral growth. Put more bluntly, it is hypocritical to claim for the teaching of English a special role in the personal and moral growth of the individual, if some of the practices and procedures of English teaching involve dishonesty and the deception of that same individual.

6.2.2 'Personal Writing' and Personal Growth

In the case of personal writing, including that which is done in response to literature, the case is much stronger. For one thing there are no 'genre characteristics' to be tackled by the pupil – the teacher's response to any such piece of writing may therefore be free of the moral difficulties of having to judge the pupil's piece of writing against the established criteria of a particular literary genre which may be beyond the capacity of the pupil ever to meet. Personal writing of the kind that asks the pupil to write about his / her own life may contribute to personal and moral growth in that it provides the pupil with the opportunity, unlikely to be accorded him / her elsewhere in the curriculum, to reflect upon his / her own experience. At the lowest level this reflection may take the form of little more than a narrative of events from the pupil's life. Nevertheless, in the hands of a skilled and caring teacher, that may be quite sufficient to provide for an enriching experience for the pupil. The teacher's response in this context, unlike the case mentioned above, would be uncluttered by the paraphenalia of literary criticism. Moreover having established a relationship with the pupil on the basis of the content of what he / she has written and not its form, the teacher may be better placed to advise on how the content might be more effectively presented. Personal writing of this kind therefore, which allows the pupil to externalise experience not only for his / her own benefit, but also so that it may be communicated to others, may help the individual reflect upon and thus to value his / her own experience. Writing might then come to be seen as being

something real and valuable in the life of the pupil and not something artificially produced in the English room.

The role of the teacher then may be said to be, in part, a moral one here - helping to guide the pupil through disparate experience; offering appropriate literary experience to which pupils might respond. In this sense writing which allows the pupils to share their experience with the teacher (and perhaps others in the class if pupils' writing is 'published' in class), may be related to class reading, where a piece of literature is 'shared' by the whole class perhaps through reading aloud. Though English teachers may not go all the way with the claim in the Bullock Report that:

"Books compensate for the difficulties of growing up" (9.2 - p125),

they might agree that developing a personal response to literature is a crucial aim of English teaching. In this there may be a genuine 'moral' concern and one which relates to the personal growth of the individual. It is in this area that the centrality of literature to English teaching becomes most clear and in particular the centrality of the novel.

6.2.3 The Novel and Personal Growth

The novel, as has been noted already, is at once the most 'social' of the literary genres in the sense that it deals with the individual in society with all the complexities that that entails, and the most powerful as far as children are concerned. The power of narrative has been the subject of much research recently, spurred on by French post-structuralist critics like the anthropologist Roland Barthes. Barbara Hardy for instance, takes the view that narrative is a "primary act of mind" (in Meek ed. (1977) p11); if this is so, it is possible to argue that the novel, as the most powerful form of narrative, can play a significant part in personal growth. Professor Hardy while rejecting the post-structuralist claims for narrative being an aesthetic invention used to manipulate and order experience, argues strongly for the power of the novel:

"The novel merely heightens, isolates and analyses the narrative motions of human conciousness." (ibid., p11)

In terms of the personal growth of the individual therefore, the view, still current amongst educationalists, that maturation is a process involving a movement out of 'fantasy life' into a vision of life 'as it really is', is challenged. This view, in seeking to polarise fiction and reality, oversimplifies the process and neglects what Hardy and neuro-biologists like R.L.Gregory would see as the crucial role played by 'fiction' in the development of the individual. Gregory indeed has spoken of a "deep biological reason" for the importance of

fiction :

"Fiction in art...gives - in forms to be shared - the essential need of all intelligent organisms: alternative views and courses of possible action." (in Meek ed. (1977) p394)

In this argument, fiction in art is seen as a corollary of our human nature - our individual identities are 'stories' compiled from our experience in the process of which we edit, restructure and 'fictionalise' just as in art. Children, who become aware of thought, dreams, emotions and feelings - all in the form of narrative - are thus predisposed towards narrative in art. Indeed we never grow out of this. It can thus be argued that the novel should not be seen as 'competing' with the real world, but as, in Barbara Hardy's words, "the continuation...of the remembering, dreaming, and planning that is in life". The reading of a novel then, can be very significant in the developmental process. D.W.Harding, for instance, has argued for the importance of the 'onlooker' role in this respect; events at which we are 'mere onlookers' he argues:

"...can have a deep and extensive influence on our systems of value." (in Meek ed. (1977), p59)

And in reading a novel, he says, the reader is a 'spectator' or onlooker, not a participant:

"...fictions contribute to defining the reader's or the spectator's values, and perhaps stimulating his desires, rather than to suppose that they gratify desire by some mechanism of vicarious experience. In this respect they follow the pattern, not of the dream with its hallucinated experiencing, but of waking supposition and imagination" (ibid. pp 69-70)

It may not be overstating the case then to claim for the novel, the greatest narrative power and therefore the potential for influencing personal growth. English teachers have always been aware of the power of narrative in class. The Belgian sociologist of education Daniel Blampain (mentioned briefly in the previous chapter) has argued in his book La Litterature de Juenesse - pour un autre usage (1979) that the teaching of literature in schools can be used for what amounts to social control and, as was discussed earlier, it is possible to see from the evidence of the survey, some justification for this view. Whether one would go all the way with Blampain is another matter - he is dealing with an educational system which has a very high degree of centralised control extending, unlike in Britain as yet, down to a heavily prescribed curriculum. Nevertheless, English teachers would all recognise the kind of 'awed' silence that a good story can inspire in a class. If this story is a novel, this experience can extend over weeks or months - depending on how the novel is read. This is particularly the case however when the novel is shared by the class as a whole through reading aloud. In this context the reading aloud of a class novel can be seen as a means by which the literary experience is shared, perhaps even 'integrated', with the personal experience of the

pupils. Moreover, it is shared even by pupils who would not have been able to gain access to it by individualised silent reading.

At this point it is perhaps worth re-stating some of the key findings of the survey :

a) 88% of the sample (107 teachers) used some form of reading aloud as their main method of reading the class novel; b) 37% of the sample (45 teachers) gave as their main reason for choosing to read aloud, the fact that it was "a valuable experience in itself" ; c) 48% of the sample (58 teachers) gave as their main reason for choosing to use a class novel with their class the fact that the "shared experience" of a novel is important.

The remarkable preponderance of reading aloud as a method of reading a class novel may be explained, as we have seen earlier, by pragmatic reasons. However it is possible to offer here a theoretical explanation in the terms of D.W.Harding. Reading aloud, it could be argued, provides for a collective 'onlooking' - Harding indeed, has described the reading of a novel as being like "listening" to a description of imagined events. In the case of a novel read aloud that is almost literally true - listening would be a major factor in the pupil's experience. It is akin to the experience of watching a serial (I have earlier suggested a soap opera) as part of an audience - the experience is at the same time individual and collectively shared. And if the audience is entirely composed of people whom you know, as in the case of a class, the potential for sharing the experience,

reflecting on it and analysing it is so much the greater. The problem is that, as the evidence of the survey suggests, there may not be much class time given over to such activities - it would appear that many teachers see the novel as little more than a source of facts about the novel's storyline.

It is possible then that when English teachers opt for the class novel, as many do (94% of the teachers in my survey), they are not merely being pragmatic, but are also responding instinctively to the power of narrative. Their emphasis on "shared experience" and on reading aloud as a "valuable experience in itself" might thus be seen as manifestations of deep-rooted but only partially understood feelings for literature and its place in the personal, moral and social development of their pupils (see Appendix VII where a follow-up visit to one of the schools in the survey designed to investigate this point further is reported on). Whether the class novel is capable of playing a role in this remains an open question. It is clear however that a great many English teachers do appear to feel, and indeed a great many have always felt, that it is. The question of whether the class novel should have such a role in the English curriculum - whether its apparent dominance of the English curriculum in the first and second years of the secondary school should be welcomed is another matter. On the evidence of the survey, it would appear that whatever view one takes of the potential (or lack of it) of the class novel in the English curriculum, the way it is being used at present in the lower years of the secondary school should give some cause for concern.

6.3 Conclusion

One of the general issues about the place of literature in the teaching of English which this subject raises is the place of the class text as opposed to individual or personal reading. This has been raised recently as far as the upper school in Scotland is concerned by the introduction this year of a 'Revised' Higher English which will include a compulsory "Review of Personal Reading" from each candidate. This seems intended to establish "personal" reading as an examinable component of the English curriculum and may be seen as the culmination of the trend in official reports over many years which argue for the importance of individualised personal reading. Unfortunately, for this discussion at least, the S.E.B. document concerned - Revised Arrangements for Higher Grade English in 1989 and After (S.E.B. 1988) - offers no precise definition of "personal reading" but distinguishes it in the use of the term 'review' from the "critical essay" examined elsewhere in the examination, which it would appear, is an essay written on a text studied in class by the whole class. For the first time then (in Scotland at least), the importance of personal reading has been recognised at the level of public examinations. Although the S.E.B. requires that the texts offered by candidates in the Review of Personal Reading must be of "recognised literary merit" (p17), final discretion is given to the individual presenting centre over candidates' choices and there is thus a real sense in which the chosen text(s) for reading is 'personal'.

The underlying question here is the same as that raised by this study. At its crudest it may be framed thus : which is more important individualised, personal reading or class reading or are they of equal importance ? The answer in part depends upon what one's view of the purpose of English teaching is. If English is an 'enriching' as well as an 'enabling' subject, then central to that enriching process must be the idea of 'shared experience' as we have seen. It could be argued that a literary experience which only one pupil has is of limited value even to that pupil. Thus at one extreme, an English course which was based exclusively on individualised reading where, for example, thirty pupils in a class (irrespective of the stage in school) were individually reading thirty different texts, might be seen as a singularly arid one for those concerned. On the other hand, an English course based exclusively on 'class' texts might be equally undesirable. What seems to be required is an English course which recognises the value of each of these reading experiences. While there seems little doubt that the value of the class novel has not been recognised in the official literature on the teaching of English, its continued use by English teachers is not altogether laudable: a close examination (such as this) of the way it is used in S1 and S2 reveals major areas of concern. Nevertheless a class text such a class novel can provide a mechanism for enrichment, but that its success in this respect is very heavily dependent on the way the teacher uses it and how the teacher copes with some of the intractable problems that it may present especially when used in mixed ability classes.

That having been said, it is questionable whether the extent of the class novel's dominance of the curriculum in S1 and S2 revealed in this study, is desirable in terms of its contribution to the 'enriching' process of personal growth discussed earlier - especially in view of the types of assignments that are apparently set on it. Likewise if we consider the 'enabling' aspect of English, it is difficult to see how the class novel's apparent dominance of the English curriculum in S1 and S2 contributes here. Mary Neville (1988), in her Scottish research, has shown that there is a 'levelling-off' in reading development between the upper primary school and the end of S2 which, she suggests, cannot to be explained simply by saying it is part of a 'natural' process as proficiency is reached. She has suggested that :

"...the sometimes low standard of much of the secondary stage work must cause us to assume that there may be a problem regarding the teaching and use of English in secondary schools." (p205)

Though not a specific reference to the kinds of assignments pupils are asked to do in relation to class novels, it would not be unreasonable to include in this description of S1 and S2 English work, some such assignments. Similarly the extent of the reliance on reading aloud revealed in my survey raises the question of how effectively this contributes to reading development especially if it is at the expense of silent reading.

Whatever its shortcomings, it seems likely that the class novel will

continue to be widely used. Its potential, its possiblities and its pitfalls need urgent attention from writers and researchers on English teaching some of whom by hitherto ignoring it, have thereby contributed to its unreformed and uncritical continued use.

CHAPTER 7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT PRACTICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

7.1 Teachers

For practising teachers one of the implications of this research is that there is a need for a review of their classroom methodology, among those many who, as appears highly likely, will continue to use the class novel as the main component of their English courses with both first and second year mixed ability classes. This is particularly true in the case of those teachers who use some form of reading aloud as their main means of reading the class novel - a very substantial number indeed according to the survey. Three points might be made here.

a) Care should be taken that the reading aloud in class of the class novel is not the only reading experience that the English classroom has to offer pupils. The importance of individual silent reading of material chosen by the pupil should be recognised and promoted. Class novel reading and individualised reading are not mutually exclusive options and can in fact be operated concurrently.

b) More attention needs to be focused on the problems of coping with those pupils unable to read the class novel on their own who might miss parts of the reading aloud through absence and who might

subsequently be required to complete assignments on the novel which require the re-reading of parts of the novel.

c) It seems desirable that some more thought be given by teachers to the whole issue of assignments on the novel. It is perhaps understandable given the pressure of class time for English and of assessment that teachers should set written assignments on class novels. And it could be argued that the use of something like a class novel for these assignments is preferable to the use of a 'course' book. Nevertheless, it does seems clear that teachers need to give more thought to the types of assignments they set on the novel. This may involve confronting some theoretical questions such as 'What are novels being used in schools for ?' The concentration on only two types of assignment revealed in the survey, suggests that this is an area where some urgent re-thinking is required.

7.2 Commentators and Teacher-Educators

From what we have been able to discover about the use of the class novel there appear to be several implications for those involved in the preparation of, or in-service provision for, English teachers and for those commentators ('official' or otherwise) who write on the teaching of English.

In the first place, there does seem to be a need for those charged with a responsibility for preparing teachers for schools, to examine

more explicitly and more thoroughly with teachers of English, the role of the class novel in the English curriculum and its implications for classroom practice. For a classroom practice as prevalent as the class novel appears to be, it is remarkable that it should figure so little both in the theoretical debate about the teaching of English and in the debate about methodology in English classrooms. Moreover, there is, as we have seen, some evidence that some teachers who use the class novel, may be unsure as to quite why they are doing so; others seem unaware of some of the serious problems that attend its use in mixed ability classes. There does seem to be a case therefore, for a 'grassroots' debate within the profession involving not simply academics and commentators but practising teachers, aimed at examining the rationale for the class novel and at exposing for scrutiny, some of its practical advantages and disadvantages. Such a debate might be initiated by colleges of education in their programmes for new teachers coming into the profession, as well as by L.E.A. advisers in English in the newly available in-service time for practising teachers.

Secondly, this study has implications for published material on English teaching. It has given grounds for considerable scepticism about the influence of some reports and publications on actual classroom practice. This may be due in part to the fact, suggested in previous chapters, that much of the writing on English teaching is advocacy and subjective rather than investigative and objective. There is some evidence, as we have seen, that far from influencing classroom practice along the lines advocated, teachers have sometimes continued

in quite the opposite direction. Some assumptions have therefore been undermined and some shibboleths exposed. It could be argued that what is required in future is more detailed investigation rather than straight advocacy. One very basic implication for such publications revealed by this study has been the crucial need for precision in terminology when investigating or discussing English classroom practice. This is particularly true for any observational studies to be carried out.

7.3 Future Research

It seems clear then that there is a need for more and clearer investigations to be carried out into classroom practice. In the field of the use of the novel in English several issues might be examined; but one might first suggest some possible research into what happens in the primary school.

7.3.1 The Upper Primary School

One interesting aspect of the class novel that would be worth studying is its position in the upper primary school. From my contacts with teachers of final year primary classes in the 20 associated primary schools of the two large comprehensive schools in which I have taught since 1984, it seems that there might be a very marked difference in approach to the novel in the two sectors. Primary teachers may use the novel differently, and may read the novel in a

very different way. For example, of the 20+ primary teachers I have spoken to in these schools, not one used a 'class set' of novels when doing a class novel i.e. not every pupil had a copy of the novel. Indeed the common approach (an approach used in every one of the ten primary schools associated with my present school and confirmed to be the norm in Lanark Division by the Adviser in Primary Education), was for only one copy of the novel to be used for the reading. That is to say only the teacher would have a copy of the novel and either she would read it aloud to the class who thus listened, or she would pass the copy to a pupil who would read aloud to the class. In the light of what has been revealed about the problems facing teachers of English in secondary schools all of whose pupils would at least have their own copy of the novel, this is an area where some very urgent observational research is required. There may be very important implications for primary / secondary liaison in this area.

7.3.2 Less Able / More Able Classes

a) Historical Position

The relationship between the prevalence of class novel use with lower ability classes as against more able classes might be investigated on a historical level. The finding in Jenkinson (1940), revealed in 2.5 above, that class novels seemed more prevalent in Senior (where there were more of the less able pupils) as opposed to Secondary schools is echoed in Holbrook's complaint in 1967 that in

Secondary Modern schools "a great deal of English time" was taken up with the novel and in Calthrop (1971), where its use with "the notoriously difficult third year" (p3) in a Secondary Modern is commented on.

b) Current Position

It might also be fruitful to investigate the current position by comparing its prevalence in Grammar and Secondary Modern schools now or by comparing its prevalence in streamed sets as opposed to mixed ability sets in comprehensives.

c) Absences of Pupils with Reading Difficulties

As well as perhaps revealing a link between the class novel and discipline, it would be interesting to discover for example, if the absence from first and second year classes of pupils with serious reading difficulties affect :

a) the prevalence of class novel use

b) the importance of the class novel as a component of the English course in these years

c) the method(s) used for reading the novel (in particular whether reading aloud is as prevalent)

d) the reasons given for using it (in particular whether "shared experience" figures as prominently)

7.3.3 Later Years of Secondary

Another fruitful area of research would be the later years of the comprehensive school. It would be possible to examine its use in mixed ability classes in the third and fourth year or with set classes in these years - or with both and affect a comparative study. Although it seems likely that the influence of external examinations and prescribed texts would increase the likelihood of class novels being used whatever the make-up of the classes, it would be interesting to investigate the prevalence of reading aloud as a method of reading the class novel and the types of assignments set on it. More generally, it would be worth knowing whether the change from mixed ability lower school classes to more homogeneous classes further up the school affected the four factors identified in 7.3.2 above.

7.3.4

One final comment might be worth making as far as future research is concerned and that relates to the researchers themselves. It could be argued that the people best placed to undertake the kind of precise and thorough investigations required, are teachers themselves. It could therefore be that encouraging more practising teachers to undertake research is the way forward. This might be done through secondments or sabbaticals and a more flexible attitude by L.E.A's to the subsidising of teachers wishing to undertake research.

REFERENCES

Advisory Council on Education in Scotland (1947). Edinburgh : H.M.S.O.

Blampain, Daniel (1979) La Litterature de Jeunnesse - pour un autre usage. Brussels : Nathan / Labor.

Board of Education (1921) The Teaching of English in England. (The Newbolt Report). London : H.M.S.O.

Calthrop, Kenyon (1971) Reading Together - An investigation into the Use of the Class Reader. London : Heinemann.

Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (1986) Education 10 - 14 in Scotland (Report of the Programme Directing Committee). Dundee : C.C.C.

D.E.S. (1975) A Language for Life. (The Bullock Report for the Department of Education and Science). London : H.M.S.O.

D.E.S. (1984) English 5 to 16 - An H.M.I. Discussion Paper. London : H.M.S.O.

D.E.S. (1988) Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of English Language (The Kingman Report). London : H.M.S.O.

Dixon, John (1967) Growth Through English. Oxford : Oxford University Press for N.A.T.E.

Dobson, Lance (1981) E263 Language in Use Block 3 Language Learning and Language Teaching. Milton Keynes : The Open University Press.

GEM (1978) Glasgow English Magazine, Number 5 - Autumn 1978. Glasgow : Strathclyde Regional Council.

Gordon, P. and Lawton, D. (1978) Curriculum Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. London : Hodder and Stoughton.

Holbrook, David (1967) English for Maturity. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Jackson, David (1983) Encounters with Books : Teaching Fiction 11-16. London : Methuen.

Jenkinson, A.J. (1940) What do Boys and Girls Read ? London : Methuen.

Lunzer, E. and Gardner, K. (eds.) (1979) The Effective Use of Reading. London : Heinemann.

MacPherson, William (1919) Principles and Method in the Study of English Literature. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Maxwell, James (1977) Reading Progress 8 to 15. Windsor : N.F.E.R.

Meek, Margaret (ed.) (1977) The Cool Web. London : Bodley Head.

Protherough, Robert (1983) Developing Response to Fiction. Milton Keynes : The Open University Press.

Neville, Mary (1988) Assessing and Teaching Language. London : Macmillan

Pugh, A.K. (1978) Silent Reading. London : Heinemann.

Pugh, A.K. (1981) E263 Language in Use Block 3 Language Learning and Language Teaching. Milton Keynes : The Open University Press.

Sampson, George (1921) English for the English. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

S.E.B. (1987) Scottish Certificate of Education Higher Grade : Revised Arrangements in English.

Whitehead, F. (1966) The Disappearing Dais. London : Chatto and Windus.

Whitehead, F., Capey, A.C. and Madden, Wendy (1975) Children's Reading Interests. (Interim report on Schools Council Project into Children's Reading Habits, 10-15). London : Evans and Methuen Educational.

Whitehead, F., (et al) (1977) Children and their Books. (Final report on Schools Council Project into Children's reading Habits, 10-15). London : Macmillan.

Tables from Jenkinson (1940)

TABLE XXXII

SUMMARY OF BOOKS STUDIED DURING ONE TERM IN THE SECONDARY AND SENIOR SCHOOLS

AGE	NO. OF CLASSES	TOTAL NO. OF BOOKS READ	AVERAGE NO. OF BOOKS PER CLASS	BOOKS CLASSIFIED INTO SORTS: STORIES	COURSES	ESSAYS	POETRY	PLAYS
SECONDARY SCHOOLS								
12+	10	32	3·2	12	2	0	11	7
13+	7	21	3·0	5	3	0	8	5
14+	10	37	3·7	7	1	6	11	12
15+	7	22	3·1	4	0	3	8	7
SENIOR SCHOOLS								
12+	10	45	4·5	28	4	0	4	9
13+	12	43	3·6	24	7	1	2	9
14+	There were no separate classes for children aged 14+ in the schools investigated.							

TABLE XXXIIIa

BOOKS STUDIED DURING ONE TERM BY THE FOUR SUCCEEDING AGE GROUPS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NO. OF BOOKS STUDIED	PROSE	POETRY	PLAYS
AGE 12+				
A (Form x)	5	Classical Stories (Merson) Progressive English Course (Oliphant, Part I)	Poems of Action	Form Room Plays Gateway to Shakespeare (Jacobs)
(Form y)	5	Tales of Wonder Oliphant, Part I	Story Poems (Dent)	Eight Modern Plays Merchant of Venice
B	3	Black Beauty Wind in the Willows	'A Verse Anthology'	
C	1		Faerie Queene	
D	5	*Read to the Form:* Heroes Wind in the Willows Blue Bird	Hiawatha J. C. Smith's Anthology, Part II	
E (Form x)	2	Norse Legends	Modern Poetry (D'Oyley)	
(Form y)	2		Mount Helicon	Merchant of Venice
(Form z)	2		Mount Helicon	Merchant of Venice
F	3	'Crusoe and Gulliver'	Marmion ('+ any I feel like reading')	
G	4	Book of Classical Stories Selected Short Stories (Modern)	Poet's Highway	Merchant of Venice
AGE 13+				
A	5	Tales of Action Reading and Thinking, Part VI Oliphant, Part II	Narrative Verse (Power)	Julius Caesar
B	3	Adventures of Odysseus	Ring of Words (anthology) Ballads and Ballad Plays	
C	(No reply for this 'average age')			
D	3	Don Quixote	Smith, Part III	Plays for Middle Forms
E (Form x)	2	Story of the Iliad	Modern Poetry (D'Oyley)	
(Form y)	2		Mount Helicon	Merchant of Venice
F	2		Smith, Part IV	Nine Modern Plays
G	4	Lorna Doone English Spoken and Written (Nelson), Part IV	Pattern Poetry, Part II	Henry V

TABLE XXXIIIb

BOOKS STUDIED DURING ONE TERM BY THE TWO SUCCEEDING AGE GROUPS IN THE SENIOR SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NO. OF BOOKS STUDIED	PROSE	POETRY	PLAYS
AGE 12+				
R	2	Treasure Island Moonfleet (J. M. Faulkner)		
S (Class x)	7	King Solomon's Mines Extracts: Jungle Book Just So Stories Cloister and the Hearth Coral Island An Enchanted Journey (King's Treasuries)		Pattern Plays
(Class y)	5	King Solomon's Mines Kidnapped Micah Clarke A Royal Progress (King's Treasuries)		Eight Modern Plays
T	(No reply for this 'average age')			
U	4	Black Bartlemy's Treasure Extracts: Cloister and the Hearth Conan Doyle's Short Stories Stevenson's Black Arrow		
V	(No reply for this 'average age')			
W (Class x)	4	Extracts: David Copperfield Gulliver's Travels		Merchant of Venice Lamb's Tales + passages from the plays
(Class y)	6	Readings from Dickens Highroads of Literature (Nelson) Study Reading (McDougall) Literary and Dramatic Readers (Schofield)	Poets and Poetry (Lay), Part III	Lamb's Tales
X	6	Ivanhoe Treasure Island White Company The Sole Survivors Gallant Deeds Children of the New Forest		
Y	5	Tom Sawyer An English Heritage (Nisbet)	Modern Poetry	Merchant of Venice Short Historical Plays for Young Actors (Chambers)
Z (Class x)	3	Tale of Two Cities	Ancient Mariner	Merchant of Venice
(Class y)	3	Tale of Two Cities	Ancient Mariner	Merchant of Venice

TABLE XXXIIIb—*continued*

SCHOOL	NO. OF BOOKS STUDIED	PROSE	POETRY	PLAYS
AGE 13+				
R	2	Tale of Two Cities Prester John		
S	4	Greenmantle Stalky and Co. Selected Essays (Addison to Lynd)		Nine Modern Plays
T (Class x)	3	More Silent Reading (extracts)	Book of Verse (anthology)	Merchant of Venice
(Class y)	2	('Miscellaneous extracts')		As You Like It Merchant of Venice
U	5	Wells' Country of the Blind Wells' In the Abyss, etc. Extracts: Lorna Doone Gateways to Bookland		
V	5	Children of the New Forest Kidnapped Modern Short Stories Modern Detective Stories		Short Plays
W	5 or more	Treasure Island English Writers through the Ages (Nisbet) Nelson's, Teaching of English series—various	Poets and Poetry (Lay)	Midsummer Night's Dream
X	5 or more	Wells' Selected Stories *Titles not specified:* Rudyard Kipling W. W. Jacobs G. K. Chesterton Conan Doyle, etc.		
Y (Class x)	5	Hereward the Wake Harte's Californian Tales Tom Brown's Schooldays Extracts: Lorna Doone English Heritage (Nisbet)		
(Class y)	2	English Heritage (Nisbet)		Julius Caesar
Z (Class x)	3	White Fang Wind in the Willows		Julius Caesar
(Class y)	2	White Fang		Julius Caesar

APPENDIX II

Draft Questionnaire - DQ

1. Do you use one novel with the whole class in the course of the school year ?

   If yes, how many different novels would you use with the whole class ?

   Would every pupil have his / her own copy ?

   If no, please explain .....

2. The main purpose in using the class novel is : (please tick more than one if necessary)

   a. to develop reading

   b. to develop language skills

   c. to stimulate creative writing

   d. to promote reading for pleasure

   e. to form the basis for other activities (please give examples)

   f. none of these (please indicate your main purpose)

3. The novel would be read (please tick more than one if a combination of methods is used) :

   a. individually by each child in class

   b. individually by each child at home

   c. aloud to the class as a whole

   d. aloud to groups within the class

4. If you ticked 3c or 3d, would you read the novel :

   a. continuously until it was finished

   b. regularly (eg. every day, every Monday) until it was finished (please specify)
   c. neither of these (please indicate your method)

5. If you ticked 4b, please answer these questions :

   a. is written work based on the novel set between readings ?

   b. is provision made for absentees who miss parts of the reading aloud ?

      If yes, please specify .....

6. Would any of the written work require that the pupil re-read part(s) of the novel ?

   If yes, and 3c or 3d have been ticked, is support provided for children with learning difficulties ?

   If yes, please specify .....

7. How long would you spend on work based on the class novel including the reading ? (please estimate in hours)

8. Please make any comment you wish here :

APPENDIX III

Pilot Questionnaire - PQ

Background Information

Please complete the following before going on to the questionnaire proper. Please do not include those classes for which you are the co-operative teacher.

Timetable in Session 1984-85

Please tick below the types of classes you have on your timetable this session.

a)	S1 (set or streamed)	0
	S1 (mixed ability)	9
	S1 (mixed ability but with remedial extraction)	0
b)	S2 (set or streamed)	0
	S2 (mixed ability)	12
	S2 (mixed ability but with remedial extraction)	0

Other Year Groups:

c) S3 (any group) 13

d) S4 (any group) 13

e) S5 (any group) 8

f) S6 (any group) 2

If you have ticked any boxes in a) or b) , how many pupils in each class have reading difficulties ?

g) In your S1 class(es) : (average) 8

h) In your S2 class(es) : (average) 6

For the purpose of this survey, a pupil with reading difficulties is defined as a pupil who would have difficulty in reading unaided, a novel selected by you for the class as a whole.

How many absentees per class do you normally have ?

i) Please tick appropriate box(es)	0 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	10+
In your S1 class(es)	1	6	2	0
In your S2 class(es)	0	9	2	0

For the purposes of this survey, 'The Class Novel' is defined as one novel, a copy of which is issued to every pupil in a given class at the same time. Once read, it may then form the basis of a variety of English work for the class. (This has also been called the class 'reader').

Please tick the boxes unless otherwise directed.

1. Do you use the class novel in the course of a school year ?

YES	12	NO	0

2. During the current school year, (1984-85), with which classes have you used or will you use, a class novel ?

S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
9	11	13	13	7	1

3. If you use the class novel with S1 or S2 mixed ability classes, is the novel read :

a. individually by each child in class 7

b. individually by each child at home 6

c. aloud to the class as a whole by you 14

d. aloud to the class as a whole by a pupil(s) 7

e. aloud to groups formed in the class 6

(Please tick more than one box if a combination of these is uesd.)

4. If you ticked 3c, 3d or 3e, how do you cope with pupils who are absent for the period(s) when this is being done ?

a. I have short versions of the novel to enable them to read and catch up quickly 1

b. I summarise the section they missed orally 8

c. I rely on the pupil himself picking up the gist 1

d. As yet I have no solution to this problem 2

e. None of these. My solution is (please specify) 8

5. If you ticked 3c, 3d or 3e, is the novel read :

a.	continuously during successive periods until it is finished	9
b.	continuously during successive periods but with assignments being set to 'break up' the reading	10
c.	regularly (eg. one period per week) while continuing with other English work	1
d.	none of these. Please indicate your method	2

6. Please estimate the number of hours in class spent on all aspects of the class novel. (Include time spent reading in class.)

Average : 19 hours

7.		YES	NO
a.	Do you normally set assignments based on the class novel ?	16	0
b.	If yes to a. would any of these assignments require the pupil to re-read parts of the novel ?	16	0
c.	If yes to b. is there a problem about pupils with reading difficulties doing these assignments ?	12	3
d.	If yes to c. do you have a solution to this problem apart from directing such pupils away from those assignments ?	8	1
e.	If yes to d. please specify :	12	
f.	How do you assess how the pupils with reading difficulties cope with the text ?	9	

e. How many times in the course of a school year would you normally use a class novel ?

With your S1 class(es) : (average) 2

With your S2 class(es) : (average) 2

8. The main reason I have for using the class novel is :

a.	Convenience : it is easier to organise work for the class if all pupils have read the same book	7
b.	The novel form offers special opportunities for developing English skills	12
c.	Neither of these. Please specify your main reason	2

9. As a component of your course for S1 and S2, what importance do you attach to the class novel ?

Please number the following according to their priority with the most important being '1', the second being '2' and so on :

a.	the class novel	6
b.	a play	3
c.	a short story done with the whole class	2
d.	a poem done with the whole class	2
e.	a course book done with the whole class	0
f.	non-text based units of work	4
g.	other (Please specify)	0
Left blank		6

10.	YES	NO
a) Is it an important aim in your use of the class novel with S1 and S2 to draw pupils' attention to the author, his purposes and techniques ?	4	10
b) If no to a) , is this an important aim with older classes ?	9	0

c) If no to a) but yes to b) , at what stage would it become an important aim ?

S3	S4	S5	S6	Left blank
8	0	0	0	2

APPENDIX IV

Final Questionnaire - FQ

The Use of the Class Novel with First and Second Year

For the purpose of this questionnaire, 'The Class Novel' is defined as one novel, a copy of which is issued to every pupil in a given class at the same time. Once read, it may then form the basis of a variety of English work for the class. (This has also been called the class 'reader').

In completing the questionnaire, please tick the boxes unless otherwise directed.

1.

	YES	NO
a. Do you have a first or second year class on your timetable during the current school year (1984-85) ?		
b. If no to a., do not complete the questionnaire but please return it.		
c. If yes to a., have you used a class novel in the current school year with either or both of your first and second year classes ?		

d. If yes to c., please tick below the types of first and / or second year classes with which you used a class novel :

(please put one tick for each class)

i. first year set or streamed	
ii. second year set or streamed	
iii. first year mixed ability	
iv. second year mixed ability	
v. first year mixed ability but with remedial extraction	
vi. second year mixed ability but with remedial extraction	

If you ticked any box in iii - vi above, please DO NOT continue but return the questionnaire.

e. If no to c., have you ever used a class novel with a first or second year class ?

f. If yes to e., why did you stop using it ? Please explain .....

2. a. If you ticked any of 1 d iii - vi, i.e. if you used a class novel with a first or second year mixed ability class during the current school year, how many pupils in each class had reading difficulties ?

Please tick the appropriate box(es) using one tick for each class. (Note - for the purpose of this questionnaire, a pupil with reading difficulties is defined as a pupil who would have difficulty in reading unaided, a novel selected by you for the class as a whole.)

	0-2	3-5	6-10	10+
In your first year class(es)				
In your second year class(es)				

b. How many absentees per period did you normally have in each class during the current school year ?

	0-2	3-5	6-10	10+
In your first year class(es)				
In your second year class(es)				

3. When you used a class novel with your first or second year mixed ability class during the current school year, how was the novel read ?

Please tick, in Column A, more than one box if a combination of methods was used.

	A	B
a. individually by each child in class		
b. individually by each child at home		
c. aloud to the class as a whole by you		
d. aloud to the class as a whole by a volunteer pupil		
e. aloud to the class as a whole by a selected pupil		
f. aloud to the class as a whole by each pupil in turn		
g. aloud to groups formed within the class		

If you ticked more than one method in a. - g. above, please rank them in order of importance in Column B, with '1' being the method by which most pages of the novel were read and so on down to '7' (if necessary) as the method by which fewest pages of the novel were read.

4. If you ticked any of 3 c., d., e., f., or g.

- i.e. if any of the reading was done aloud -

how did you cope with pupils who were absent

for the period(s) when this was being done ?

Please put '1' next to your main method

and so on down to '4' (if necessary)

a. I had short versions of the novel to enable them to read and catch up quickly

b. I summarise the section they missed orally

c. I relied on the pupil(s) to catch up by reading the missed section silently

d. None of these. My method was (please describe):

e. If, as yet, you have no solution to this problem please tick this box

5. If you ticked any of 3 c., d., e., f., or g.,

- i.e. if any of the reading was done aloud -

was the novel read :

a. continuously (i.e. without interuption by for example writing assignments) during successive periods until it was finished

OR

b. continuously during successive periods but with interuptions for writing assignments (e.g. at the end of a chapter / section)

OR

c. regularly (e.g. one period per week) while carrying on with other work unrelated to the class novel

OR

d. None of these. Please describe your method :

6. Please estimate the number of hours IN CLASS spent on all aspects of one particular class novel (include time spent reading in class)

7. a. Did you set assignments based on the class novel ?

   b. If yes to a., did any of the assignments require the pupil to re-read parts of the novel ?

   c. If yes to b., how many pupils PER CLASS had problems doing these assignments because of reading difficulties ?

      In your 1st year class :

      In your 2nd year class :

   d. Did you give special attention to these pupils ? If yes, please specify :

	Y	N

8. What kind of writing assignments did you set on the class novel ? Please rank in order of importance with '1' being the type of assignment on which pupils spent MOST TIME, and so on down to '5' (if necessary) as the type of assignment on which pupils spent least time.

   a. questions on the novel's storyline

   b. questions on the novel's theme(s)

   c. questions on the author's purpose(s) and techniques

   d. assignments using (parts of) the novel as a stimulus for personal/creative writing

   e. other. Please specify :

9.

	1st Yr	2nd Yr
a. How many class novels have you used in the current session (1984-85) with each class ?		
b. What percentage of English periods in the current session as a whole, did you devote to class novels and related work ?	%	%

10. Why did you choose to use a class novel with your first or second year mixed ability class ?

Please tick in Column A, those reasons that you agree with :

	A	B
a. class sets of novels are readily available in the departmental stock		
b. it is easier to organise work for the class if all pupils have read the same novel		
c. the shared experience of a class novel is important		
d. other. Please specify :		

If you ticked more than one reason in a.- d. above, please rank them in order of importance in Column B, with '1' being the main reason and so on down to '4' (if necessary) as the least important of the reasons ticked.

11. If you ticked any of 3 c., d., e., f., or g. - i.e. if any of the reading was down aloud - why did you choose to spend class time reading aloud ?

Please tick, in Column A those reasons that you agree with :

a. reading aloud is a valuable experience in itself

b. it overcomes the problems of pupils with reading difficulties who could not read the novel silently by themselves

c. it ensures that every pupil goes through the novel at the same rate, thus making it easier to organise classwork

d. other. Please specify :

	A	B
a.		
b.		
c.		
d.		

If you ticked more than one reason in a. - d., above, please rank them in order of importance in Column B, with '1' being the main reason and so on down to '4' (if necessary) as the least important of the reasons ticked.

12. What are the problems of using a class novel with a first or second year mixed ability class ?

Please tick in Column A, those statements that you agree with :

a. the absence of pupil choice may mean a lack of motivaton

b. not every pupil is able to read the novel unaided

c. the more able pupils may be held back by the rest of the class

d. other. Please specify :

A	B

If you ticked more than one statement in a. - d., above, please rank them in order of importance in Column B, with '1' being the main problem and so on down to '4' (if necessary) as the most minor of the problems ticked.

13. As a component of your first and / or second year mixed ability classes during the current session, how important was the class novel ?

Please rank the following in order of importance in terms of time spent in class on each, with '1' for the kind of work upon which MOST CLASS TIME was spent and so on down to '7' (if necessary) for the kind of work upon which least class time was spent :

	1st Yr	2nd Yr
a. the class novel		
b. a play done with the whole class		
c. a short story done with th whole class		
d. a poem done with the whole class		
e. a course book done with the whole class		
f. non-text based units of work		
g. other. Please specify :		

APPENDIX V

MANCHESTER COMPARISON

The aim of this very limited comparison was to look at whether the data from Lanark were in some way affected by being exclusively Scottish or indeed from only one division of Strathclyde.

21 questionnaires were sent to three Manchester comprehensives. Brookway High, St. Paul's and St. Thomas Aquinas. Some 1: questionnaires were returned of whom nine had either or both First and Second Year mixed ability classes. Within these nine, all three schools were represented and it is with these that the present comparison is concerned.

In conducting this comparison, some of the data from 4.2 'Ke Issues' will be examined. Figures from the whole sample (i.e excluding the Manchester data) will be compared with figures from th Manchester schools alone in an attempt to compare responses. In eac case the figures from Manchester will be in brackets.

a) Prevalence of the Class Novel

To begin with we might look at the numbers of teachers indicatin

that they used the class novel either (or both) a first or second yea
mixed ability class. Consider the following table :

Teachers of S1 mixed ability	94 (7)
Teachers of S2 mixed ability	78 (8)

It is clear therefore that as with the whole sample, the Manchester
data indicates the widespread nature of class novel use.

b) Importance of the Class Novel

When asked to rank in order of importance in terms of the amount o
class time they devoted to various components of their English course
the figures for Rank '1' were :

Teachers of S1 mixed ability	61 (6)
Teachers of S2 mixed ability	50 (5)

If the various components of the English course are listed in order o
importance with the component most frequently ranked '1' by teachers
coming first (as in TABLE 24 in 4.2) the picture is as follows :

	S1 Ranked '1'		S2 Ranked '1'	
1. class novel	61	(6)	50	(5)
2. non text-based units of work	15	(0)	11	(1)
3. course book done with whole class	8	(1)	5	(1)
4. other	3	(0)	2	(0)
5. play done with whole class	2	(0)	1	(0)
6. poem done with whole class	1	(0)	0	(0)
7. short story done with whole class	0	(0)	1	(0)

Thus in both the whole sample and in the Manchester sample, the importance of the class novel relative to other components of the S1 , S2 curriculum is clear. This is further confirmed by looking at the number of class novels used per session :

No. teachers of S1 using three or more class novels	55	(6)
No. teachers of S2 using three or more class novels	45	(6)

c) Reasons for Using Class Novels

When the ranked '1' reasons for using class novels given by teachers are listed in order with the reason attracting most '1' rankings at the top, the pattern (see TABLE 26 in 4.2) is as follows :

1.	The shared experience of a class novel is important	51 (7)
2.	It is easier to organise work for the class if all pupils have read the same novel	30 (1)
3.	Class sets of novels are readily available in the departmental stock	13 (0)
4.	It is departmental policy	6 (0)
5.	It encourages reading	2 (1)
6.	It is a source of varying levels of difficulty in assignments	3 (0)
7.	Alternative to course books	2 (0)
8.	External exam influence	1 (0)
9.	Form best suited to personal growth	1 (0)
10	Reading skill is developed	1 (0)

Once again it is difficult see any appreciable difference in the pattern of responses.

d) Problems in Using the Class Novel

The final point worth comparing here is the issue of problems related to using a class novel. The pattern of '1' ranked problems was more evenly spread in the whole sample as TABLE 27 in 4.2 shows. When the '1' ranked problems from the Manchester sample are put alongside those the following picture emerges :

1.	not every pupils is able read the novel unaided	52 (3
2.	the more able pupils may be held back by the rest of the class	32 (4
3.	the absence of choice may mean a lack of motivation	21 (2

Just as in the whole sample, the pattern of Manchester responses her is more even.

Although a very limited comparison, it can be said that there doe not appear to be any striking differences in the patterns of response to questions in this 'Key Issues' section of Chapter 4.

APPENDIX VI

Table from the Bullock Survey (D.E.S. 1975)

Table 22

SIZE AND RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL POPULATION OF SCHOOLS FROM WHICH IT WAS DRAWN.

	Number of schools			
	In population		*Approached*	*Replied*
Type of school	*January 1973**	*January 1972**		
Primary				
(i)	5,683	5,425	269	246
(ii)	10,936	11,147	1,106†	964†
(iii)	4,556	4,578	226	205
Secondary				
(iv)	224	229	42	38
(v)	234	187		
(vi)	4,089	4,298	380	354

*Figures are given for the total number of schools in 1972 and 1973, because although the survey was conducted in 1973 the sample had to be drawn from the 1972 list of schools.

APPENDIX VII

FOLLOW-UP VISIT TO SURVEY SCHOOL

In February 1989, I arranged a visit to one of the two schools in the 1985 survey, which had returned completed all the questionnaires that it was sent. The aim was to interview teachers at first hand and in particular to ask about the issue of 'shared' experience. I visited, at the request of the head of department, the departmental meeting. It was not possible to interview, as I had hoped, each teacher individually.

The department had undergone some changes, dropping from eight teachers to five in the intervening period. All five teachers were however at the school at the time of the issue of the questionnaires, though none remembered exactly what he / she had said. It was interesting therefore to have confirmed by every teacher in the department that they still used class novels, indeed the use of the class novel was "the backbone" of both the S1 and the S2 curriculum. Similarly confirmed was the use of reading aloud as the main means of reading the class novel, although one teacher (the head of department), did say that she was trying to move away from reliance on that method of reading. When asked if moving away from it was problematical, she explained that the presence in the class of pupils who would be unable to read the novel by themselves was the major problem.

The issue of 'shared experience' was raised. The teachers were unanimous in the view that it was important. I was interested in finding out more precisely what they understood by it. Answers varied from "a sense of being part of the whole class" to pupils "extending their experience" through literature. One teacher mentioned "sharing the technique of the author" but was unable to elaborate further. It appeared that although these teachers had no doubt about the importance of the shared experience of literature through the use of a class novel, they were less certain about precisely why this was so.

The problems encountered by pupils with reading difficulties who might be absent why the reading aloud of the novel was going on, but that was not felt by any of the teachers present to be a problem since absenteeism in their school was not a problem. Likewise coping with the problem of pupils with reading difficulties having to re-read parts of the novel in order to complete assignments was not considered to be major because of the ample provision of co-operative teaching in S1 and S2.